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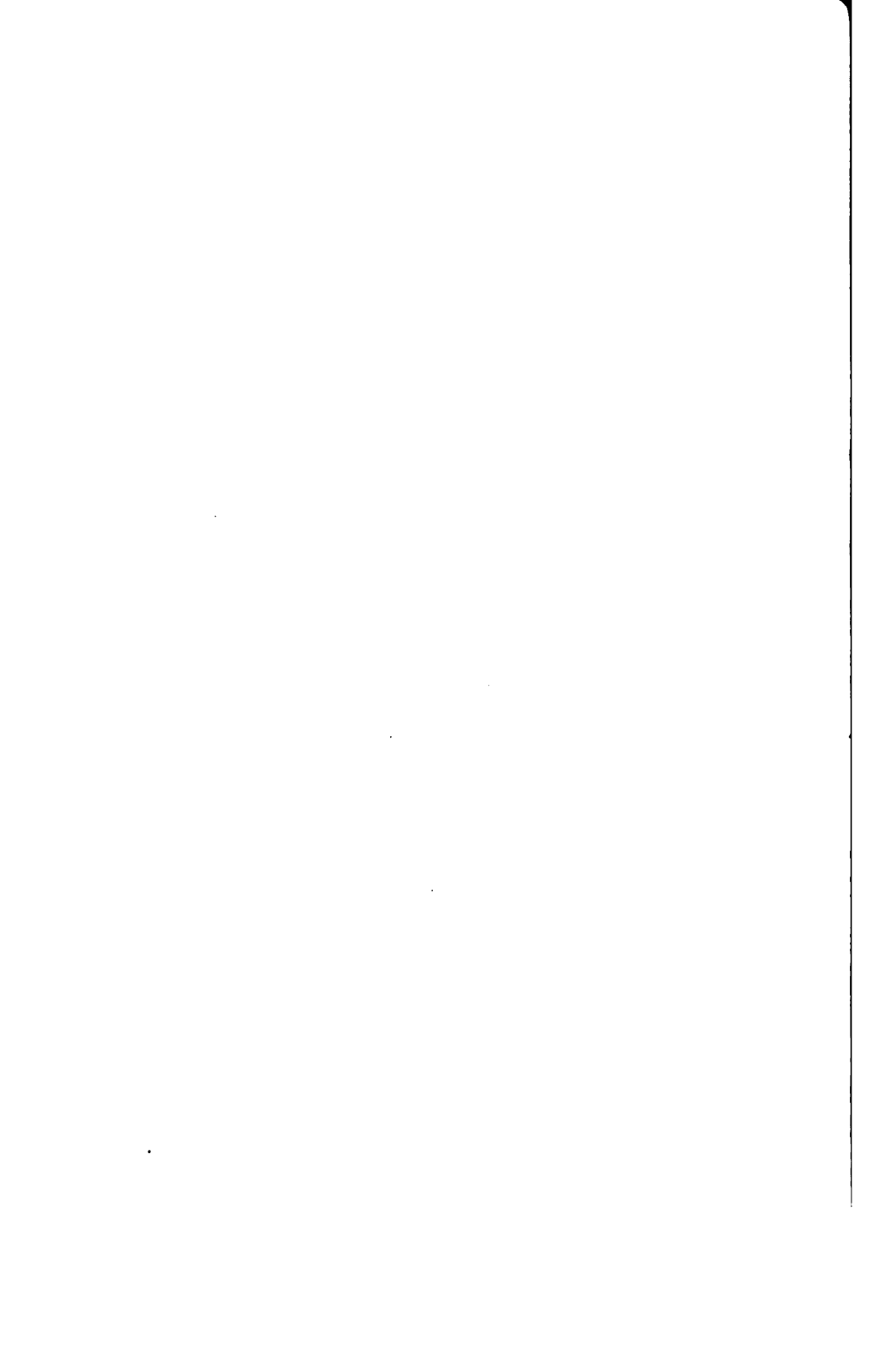
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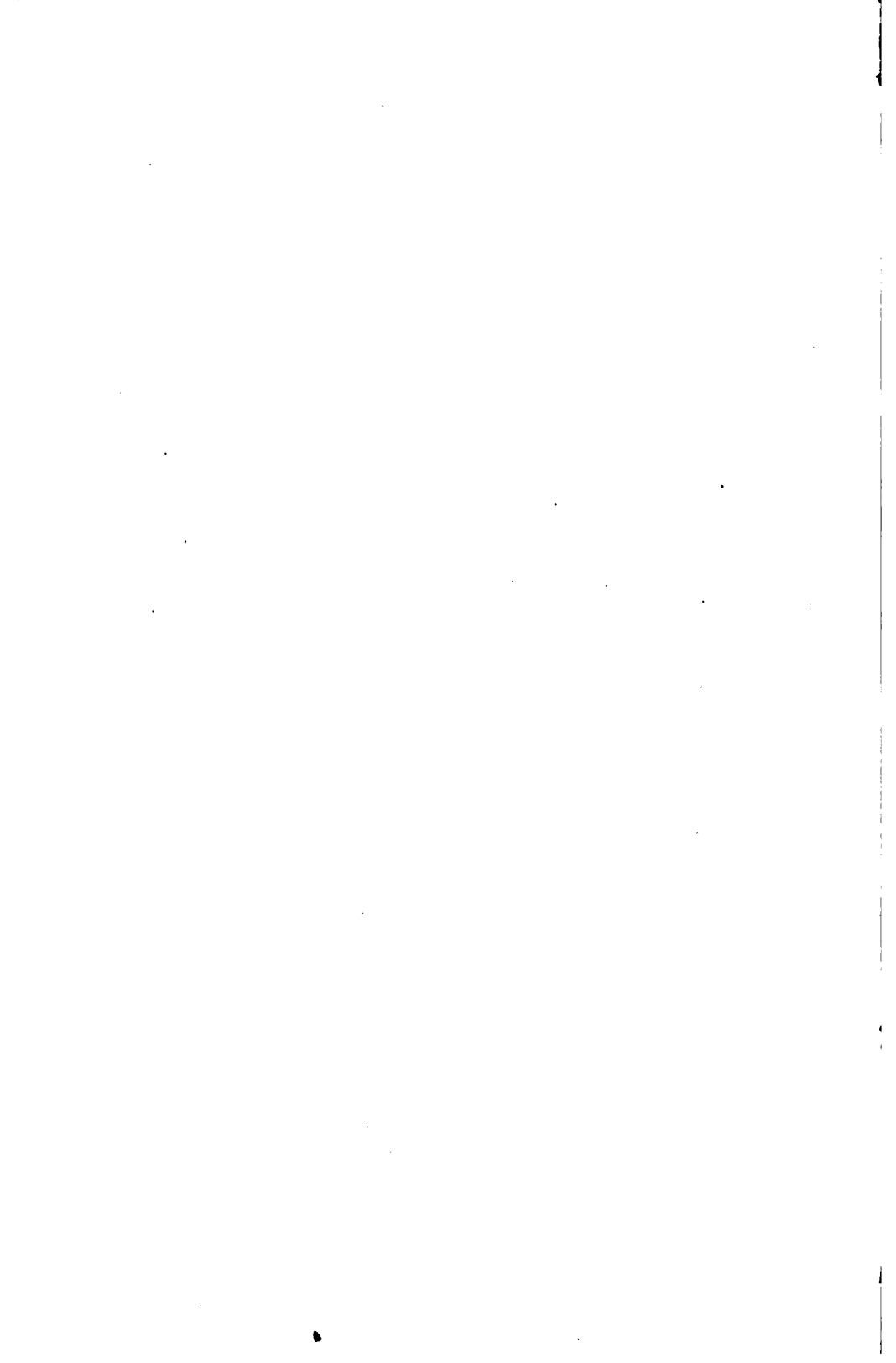
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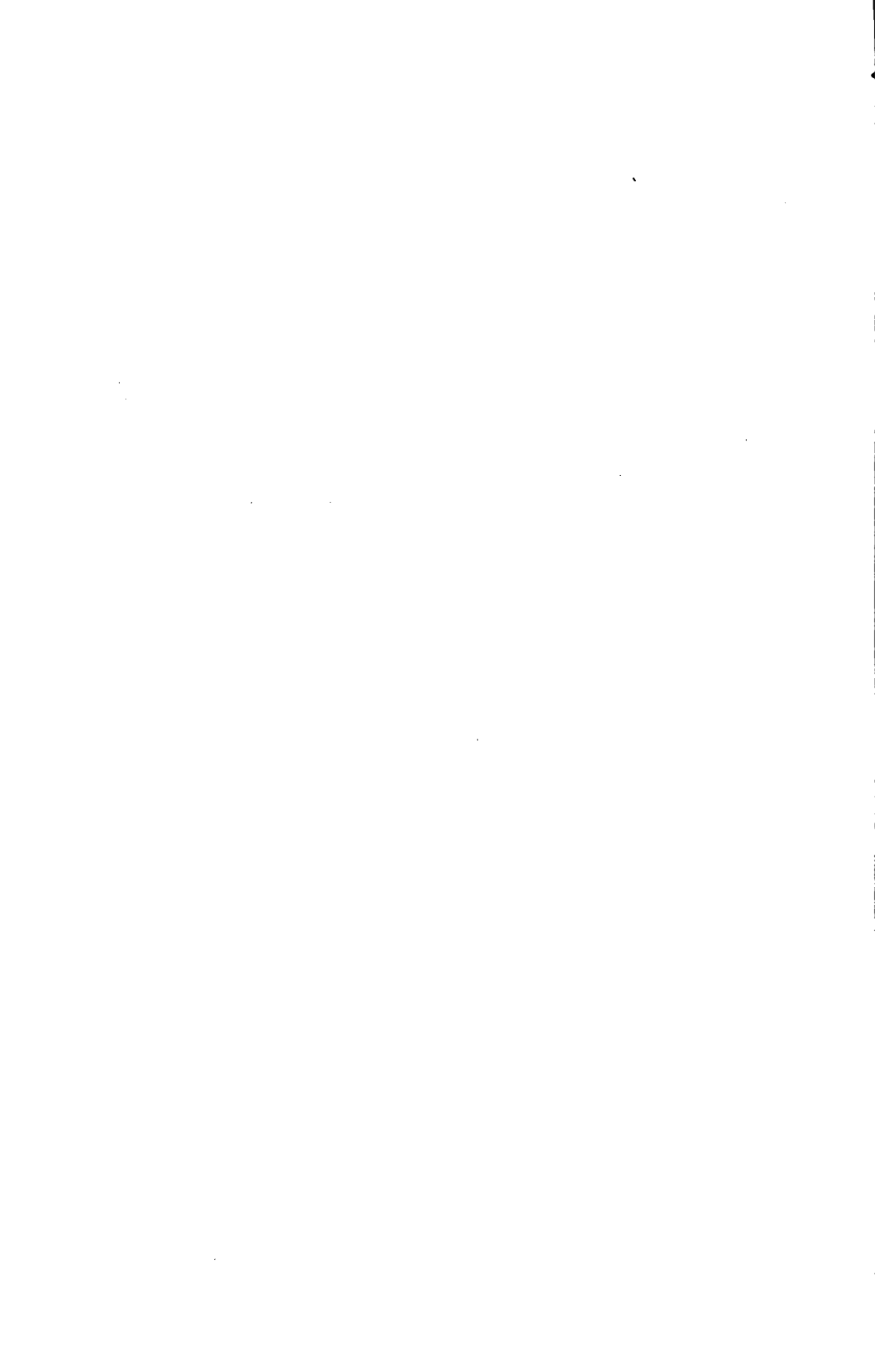
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SHAKESPEARE'S MARRIAGE



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SHAKESPEARE'S MARRIAGE

HIS DEPARTURE FROM STRATFORD
AND OTHER INCIDENTS
IN HIS LIFE

BY

JOSEPH WILLIAM GRAY



LONDON
CHAPMAN & HALL, LD.
1905

P R E F A C E

THE enquiries of which the following pages are the outcome were commenced with the intention of rectifying certain apparently erroneous impressions upon the subject of Shakespeare's marriage licence. Other results obtained in the course of the investigation seem, however, to be of sufficient interest to place on record, although some of them, certainly, add to the great mass of inference and assumption to which few writers on the incidents of the poet's life avoid making a contribution.

Of the two marriage licence documents now preserved at the Worcester Diocesan Registry the bond alone possesses any biographical value, the entry in the bishop's register, recording the issue of the licence, being of interest only on account of certain differences from the bond, one of which, however, affords a possible clue to the place of marriage or the residence of one of the parties to the application.

Many years have elapsed since these writings were discovered, and both have been the subjects of much discussion; but it does not appear that a complete explanation of the discrepancies has yet been given or the suggestive value of the bond fully realized. With the object of ascertaining whether some new light could be thrown upon the points of disagreement and the circumstances under which the licence was obtained, I have examined such of the contemporary matrimonial and other records as appeared likely to afford

information. And as the traditions relating to the date of the poet's removal to London recorded by Aubrey do not appear to have received the attention they deserve, while undue importance has been attached to Rowe's version of the incident, the more trustworthy accounts of the departure from Stratford and the various theories founded upon them have been submitted to the test of knowledge gained in the course of my investigations. Other matters, some of little moment, and worthy of notice only because they have been dealt with by one or other of the poet's biographers, are also discussed.

A somewhat free use has been made of the contents of my note-book, with the result that much of antiquarian and local rather than Shakespearean interest has been introduced into some of the chapters. The nature of the evidence upon which most of my conclusions are founded and the frequent dissent from existing theories upon which I have ventured seem, however, to necessitate this copious reference to authorities and quotation therefrom. For instance, in arguing against the assumption that some irregularity was covered by Shakespeare's marriage licence, it was necessary to give an account of Bishop Whitgift's policy and administration and of his efforts to prevent the use of licences for clandestine marriages.

The proper scope of my work extends only to the year 1593, after which date Shakespeare's life is told mainly in connection with his literary career; but, in order to make the chronicle of events more complete and the book more useful to general readers, the principal occurrences of the remaining twenty-three years of the poet's life are briefly detailed.

I should esteem it a favour to be informed of any errors that, in spite of careful verification of all references, may be found in the following pages.

PREFACE

vii

In acknowledging the assistance received in the course of my work I have, in particular, to thank Mr. J. H. Hooper, M.A., Registrar of the diocese of Worcester, for access to the valuable and well-arranged muniments in his charge. I am also under obligations to Mr. Richard Savage of Shakespeare's Birthplace and Mr. W. Salt Brasington, F.S.A., of the Memorial Library, Stratford-upon-Avon, for kind replies to queries upon local matters, and to Mr. Francis H. Butler, M.A., for reading the proofs with me.

CHELLENHAM,

January 1905.

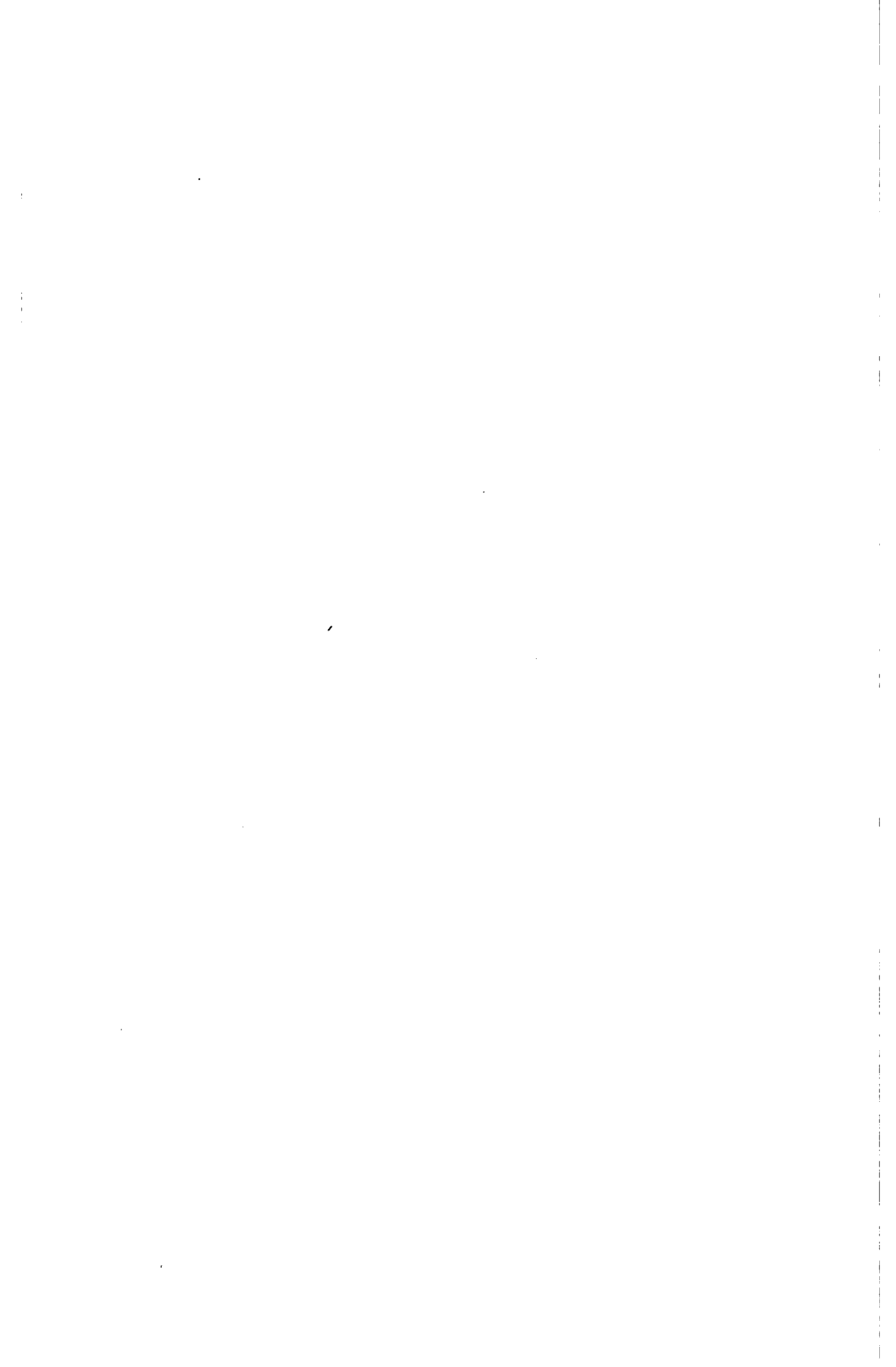


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SHAKESPEARE'S MARRIAGE AND DEPARTURE FROM STRATFORD

ERRATUM.

Page 157, line 11, for "W. Danter," read "J. Danter."

SHAKESPEARE'S MARRIAGE.

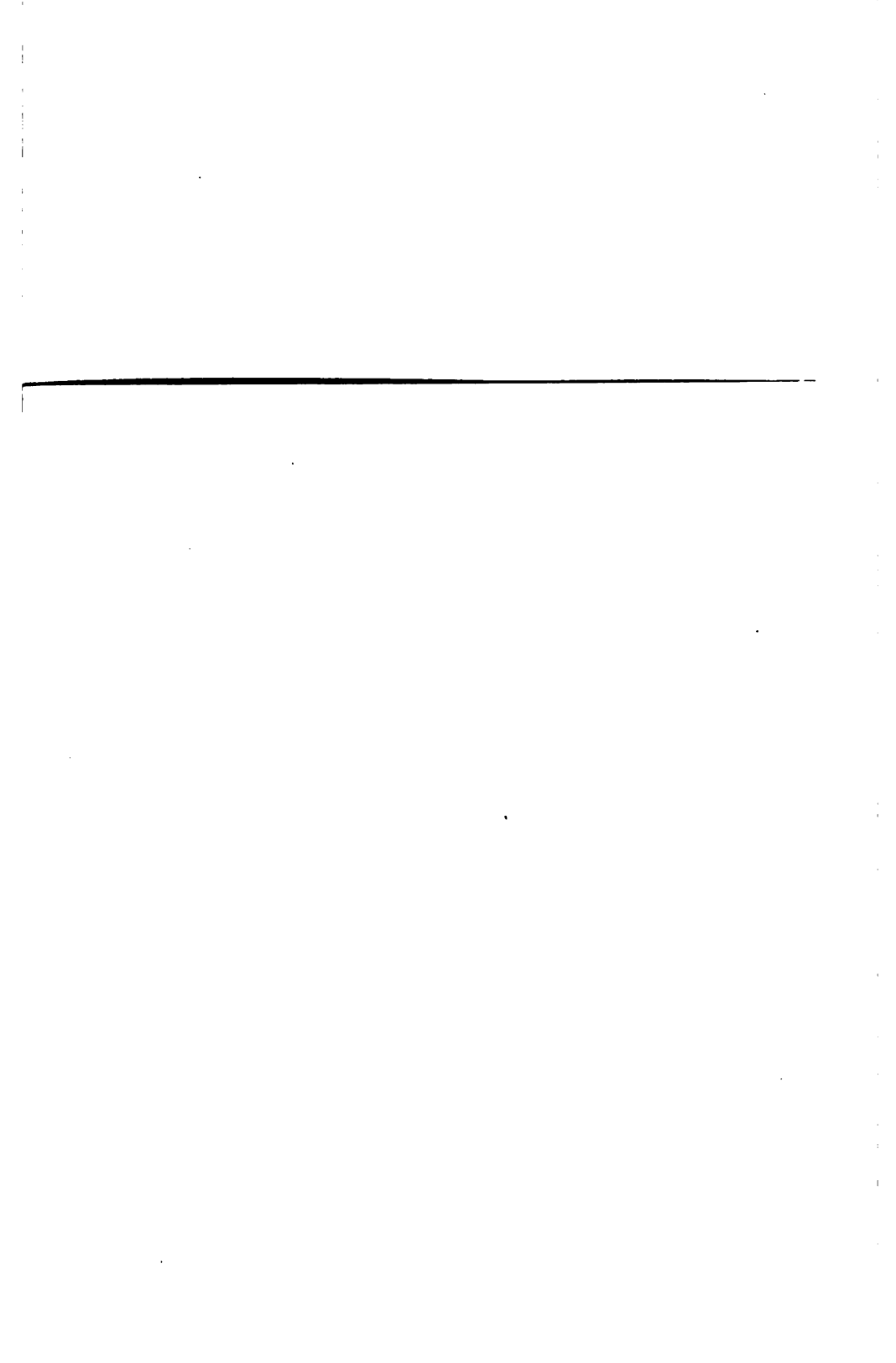


marriage and the parts played by the heroines of this drama
bridegroom in the preliminaries.¹

It would, perhaps, have been well if biographers had been content to leave some of the details of this part of Shakespeare's private life in the oblivion from which it has availed little, in the interests of the poet or his readers, to rescue them, on account either of the presumed facts or of the conclusions to which they lead.² But, since these personal affairs have

¹ See Charles Knight, *William Shakspeare, A Biography*, 1865, pp. 214-76; Thomas de Quincey, *Shakspeare, A Biography*, 1864, pp. 42-56.

² A not unusual result of inquiries of this kind.





SHAKESPEARE'S MARRIAGE AND DEPARTURE FROM STRATFORD

I

INTRODUCTION

THE year 1582, notable in Shakespearean annals as the date of the poet's marriage, acquires additional interest from the probability that this event was very closely preceded or followed by his removal to London. Apart from the curiosity which busies itself with trivial incidents in the lives of great men, the date of this crisis in the poet's affairs, the occurrences that led up to it, and its immediate results, are matters upon which information is much desired on account of their bearing upon the beginnings of his regular employment in the theatre and his literary work in connection therewith. The recorded facts of Shakespeare's youth are very few, and the failure of attempts to reconstruct, from traditions and imperfectly known incidents, portions of the lost history of his early years is exemplified in the contradictory statements and opinions regarding his marriage and the parts played by the friends of the bride and bridegroom in the preliminaries.¹

It would, perhaps, have been well if biographers had been content to leave some of the details of this part of Shakespeare's private life in the oblivion from which it has availed little, in the interests of the poet or his readers, to rescue them, on account either of the presumed facts or of the conclusions to which they lead.² But, since these personal affairs have

¹ See Charles Knight, *William Shakspeare, A Biography*, 1865, pp. 214-76 ; Thomas de Quincey, *Shakspeare, A Biography*, 1864, pp. 42-56.

² A not unusual result of inquisitions of this kind.

been discussed from almost every point of view and, in the absence of more interesting matter, seem likely to be the subjects of further curiosity and debate, it is desirable that the facts should be correctly stated and their meanings understood so far as surviving records will permit.

The long series of adverse comments upon Shakespeare and his wife commenced before the end of the seventeenth century with Aubrey's reference to the wife of the Oxford vintner, Davenant.¹ The next contribution was made between 1750 and 1778 by William Oldys in some speculations as to Anne Shakespeare's beauty and the probability that certain of the Sonnets were addressed to her "on some suspicion of her infidelity."² George Steevens called attention to the lack of evidence, and referred to the charge of jealousy as an unwarrantable conjecture. Malone, on the other hand, while questioning the evidence upon which Oldys founded his opinions, suggested that both jealousy and the likelihood that Shakespeare was not very strongly attached to his wife were indicated by the fact that jealousy was "the principal hinge of four of his plays," by the Davenant scandal, and by the bequest of the "second-best bed," as interlined in the poet's will.³ To these matters of debate were afterwards added disparity in the ages of the pair and Shakespeare's supposed long absence from the home at Stratford-upon-Avon. Material for further adverse comment was provided in 1836 by the discovery of the marriage licence bond, which brought to light the interval between the issue of the licence and the baptism of the eldest child and the absence of John Shakespeare's name as a surety or as a consenting party. A clandestine performance of the marriage ceremony was erroneously supposed to be indicated by the necessity for dispensing with the full publication of banns.

¹ *Lives of Eminent Men*: "Sir William Davenant, Knight," ii. 302-3. See also Appendix, No. I.

² Notes in Gerard Langbaine's *English Dramatic Poets*. See Appendix, No. I.

³ Some of the details of this discussion are given in the *Supplement to Shakespeare's Plays* by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1780, i. 653-7, and Malone's *Plays and Poems of Shakespeare*, 1821, xx. 305-9.

Some years later, the discovery of the record of the issue of the marriage licence, with important differences between the terms of that document and the bond, gave a fresh impetus to discussion. Among the more recent writers who have expressed opinions unfavourable to Shakespeare or his wife on one or more of these points are Thomas Moore,¹ Thomas de Quincey,² Thomas Campbell,³ Richard Grant White,⁴ Lord Campbell,⁵ and Dr. Karl Elze.⁶

Not only Shakespeare and his wife, but even the unknown minister that performed the marriage ceremony⁷ and others concerned are included in these criticisms, none of which can be accepted as presenting either persons or incidents in a true light. De Quincey's comments, for instance, if taken seriously, may mislead many to whom his high reputation as a man of letters is some guarantee of the correctness of his facts and the soundness of his conclusions.⁸ The errors of such men are difficult either to ignore or to rectify, but in most of these cases, happily for the repute of those concerned, it can be shown that the imputations are based upon a misapprehension as to the reasons for obtaining the marriage licence or a misreading of the terms of the bond. False impressions of Shakespeare's friends are created by De Quincey's ill-natured reference to the sureties and their "gross clownish pronunciation" of the poet's surname (*Shagspere*) at the supposed interview with the "bishop's secretary."⁹ Of their share in the transaction nothing is known beyond the fact that by giving the required security they rendered assistance without which the marriage licence could not have been obtained. These random comments, as well as Joseph Hunter's slighting reference to the rude marks made by the sureties in signing the bond and to their

¹ *The Life, Letters, and Journals of Lord Byron*, 1869, p. 271.

² *Shakespeare, A Biography*, pp. 43-93.

³ *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, 1859, i. xxvii.

⁴ *Memoirs of the Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 48-53.

⁵ *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements Considered*, p. 107.

⁶ *Shakespeare, A Literary Biography*, p. 76.

⁷ Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 21.

⁸ See Appendix, No. II.

⁹ The name *Shagspere* occurs also in the *Act Book* of the Consistory Court. See p. 100.

unfitness for a place at a poet's bridal,¹ must have been prompted by far-fetched notions as to Shakespeare's position in 1582. Many of the allusions to various aspects of the intimacy between William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway and to their married life stand in unpleasant contrast to the cautious and sympathetic references of other writers who are not prepared to dogmatize on such questions as the extent of their moral delinquency, and are unwilling to justify one at the expense of the other by an attempt to allocate the imputed blame. It will, perhaps, be urged that the views to which attention has been called are fully justified by the common experience of life as we now see it; but this can hardly be relied upon as a safe guide in the formation of a correct judgment on matters obscured by the lapse of three centuries. Whether a more intimate acquaintance with the facts, mostly long since forgotten, or, what is of equal importance, a better knowledge and appreciation of modes of thought now no longer in vogue would justify any of the criticisms, it is impossible to say. This much, however, is certain, that no undisputed facts can be cited nor can any reliable documentary evidence be produced in their support other than the records of the grant of the marriage licence and of the baptism of Susanna Shakespeare, the dates of which are held to establish the principal charge in the indictment. The delay in completing the marriage rites thus disclosed, though not in accordance with modern ideas of propriety, appears to have escaped contemporary censure. Anne Hathaway's alleged seniority may have given her an advantage which was used in forcing the marriage upon her youthful lover.² On the other hand, it is quite as likely that a "premature knowledge of the world" and the early maturity often associated with great genius gave him advantages quite equal to those which the woman derived from her greater age and experience. For some reason now unknown, upon which local tradition throws no light, Anne Shakespeare may have

¹ *New Illustrations*, i. 50.

² Goldwin Smith, *Shakespeare the Man*, p. 22; Samuel Butler, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered*, p. 92.

failed to retain her husband's affection.¹ Jealousy and strife may have been followed by estrangement.² It is possible that Shakespeare's long periods of absence from his family were borne by him with a willingness not quite consistent with a desire for his wife's companionship or a preference for domestic life. He may have been dissolute and prodigal in his youth, and on leaving Stratford for London may perhaps have freely availed himself of the greater liberty thus gained.³ The objection to all of these surmises is not that they are beyond belief or even improbable, but that there is no clear evidence upon which any one of them can be substantiated. As most of the charges can be neither established nor disproved, it is not purposed to enter upon any vindication beyond an attempt to show that an unwarranted use has been made of the marriage licence documents. An appearance of truth has been given to hypotheses which, owing to frequent repetition, are now often accepted as facts. This last objection also applies in some measure to the terms used by Shakespeare's apologists,⁴ who in an excess of admiration for his rare intellectual gifts overlook the important fact that we know almost as little about his virtues as his vices.

No discussion upon matters connected with Shakespeare's marriage seems to be complete without a reference to the probability that, in accordance with the custom of the time, he entered into a contract with Anne Hathaway a few months before the date of the licence. The methods of conducting the espousals in Elizabethan days, as described in the proceedings of the Consistory Court at Worcester,⁵ indicate that, except under peculiar circumstances, such as a suit to enforce the completion of the marriage, evidence of the transaction

¹ F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*, p. 105; F. G. Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare*, pp. 88-9.

² Joseph Graves, *The Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 6; W. Carew Hazlitt, *Shakespeare*, p. 44.

³ G. G. Gervinus, *Shakespeare Commentaries*, pp. 30 and 33.

⁴ The views of this school are ably and pleasantly expressed by Charles Knight, *William Shakespeare, A Biography*, 1865, pp. 105-296. See also C. and M. C. Clarke, *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, i. xxix., xxxiii.

⁵ For extracts from these depositions, see Appendix, No. IV.

was not at all likely to be placed on permanent record. The failure to discover evidence of such a precontract in the poet's case therefore leads to no definite conclusion. But, as a binding agreement could then be legally entered into with very little formality, it has been properly held that so simple an expedient for avoiding scandal or still greater mischief could scarcely have been neglected, especially if the adverse view of Anne Hathaway's part in the transaction is to be accepted. The judge's decision in the case of Holder against Shaw,¹ cited by Halliwell-Phillips in support of his contention that "Shakespeare could have entered, under any circumstances whatever, into a precontract with Anne Hathaway,"² proves that an informal contract of marriage between competent parties, before witnesses, and in some cases without the interference of parents or guardians,³ although there was, sometimes, a stipulation for their consent, was as binding as the more formal troth-plight of which the parents and friends on both sides had signified their approval. A promise *per verba presentis* or cohabitation after a promise *per verba futuro*⁴ would have given Anne Hathaway a legal claim to the completion of the marriage.⁵ Persistent refusal on Shakespeare's part would have rendered him liable to excommunication and imprisonment until the decree of the judge had been obeyed,⁶ and the sentence of the court would have rendered void a subsequent marriage with another. So far, Anne Hathaway's position was unassailable. Such a marriage, though irregular, was regarded as valid; and even if Shakespeare had still refused and the

¹ *Act Book*, No. 4, and *Deposition Book*, No. 8, Worcester Consistory Court, October 1585 to June 1586.

² *Outlines*, i. 65. This reference applies in all cases to the 7th edition of *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, by J. O. Halliwell-Phillips.

³ The parents do not appear to have been called upon to give evidence in this case.

⁴ See Henry Swinburne, *A Treatise of Spousals*, 1686, pp. 35-6; J. T. Hammiok, *The Marriage Laws of England*, pp. 3, 4, and 51; *The Rights and Liabilities of Husband and Wife* (Sweet & Sons), p. 4. See also 32 Henry VIII., c. 38, s. 2; 2 & 3 Edward VI., c. 23, s. 2; 1 & 2 Philip and Mary, c. 8, s. 19; 1 Elizabeth, c. 1, s. 11.

⁵ The question of the consent of parents, which complicates Shakespeare's case, is discussed in the chapter on "John Shakespeare's Consent."

⁶ See Appendix, No. V.

ceremony in church¹ had not been performed, their child would have been legitimate.

But even these considerations do not appear to settle the question of morals in the minds of some of the poet's biographers. They contend that, whatever privileges were claimed or conceded by virtue of the espousal as an important part of the marriage rites, this precontract was not intended to encourage delay until the final ceremony "in the face of the Church" had become absolutely necessary.² These doubts as to the efficacy of the precontract, as exonerating Shakespeare and his wife from blame, have induced some writers to make the "conventional morality of the day" responsible for the supposed lapse and, with good reason, to find extenuation in the survivals of ancient usages³ handed down from the early days when missionaries were enjoined not to be too severe with their converts should the blessing of the Church upon their marriages be tardily sought.⁴ The difficulty of recalling, with any approach to correctness, the ideas of right and wrong prevailing three centuries ago upon the subject of these prebenediction relationships,⁵ besides the medley of civil and canon law relating to marriage, makes it impossible, however, to set up a common standard by which the moral responsibility of Shakespeare and his wife can now be measured, even if any useful purpose were served by so doing. Yet sufficient is known about the social habits and moral conditions of the time to indicate that, in such cases as those under discussion, candidates for matrimony and their friends were less concerned about the ethics of a transaction in which the parties had

¹ The church ceremony was, however, necessary to entitle the wife to dower. See *Bracton*, edited by Sir Travers Twiss, iv. 503.

² For some advice to contracted couples, see Dr. F. J. Furnivall's Introduction to the *Royal Shakspeare*, pp. vii., viii.

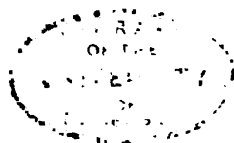
³ These still survive, in a modified form, in some parts of the kingdom.

⁴ This was, no doubt, regarded by the Church as more desirable than the older ceremony, in which the man merely led the bride from her house to his own.

⁵ On the subject of these marriages, see W. M. Rossetti, *Complete Works of William Shakspeare*, p. vii.; O. C. Stopes, *The Bacon-Shakspeare Question Answered*, p. 212; Barrett Wendell, *A Study in Elizabethan Literature*, p. 8; F. G. Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakspeare*, p. 88; J. Pym Yeatman, *The Gentle Shakspeare, A Vindication*, p. 32.

accepted the position of husband and wife, and certain responsibilities had been incurred, than about the necessity of a timely completion of the marriage in order to avert the serious consequences of delay. The conduct of Shakespeare and his wife in this matter does not appear to have been considered deserving of social penalties. If their actions had shocked the sensibilities of friends and neighbours, or had earned the disapproval of public opinion, it is strange that the scandal should have escaped preservation amongst traditions which included Shakespeare's drinking bout at Bidford, the whipping and imprisonment, and the Davenant and Manningham anecdotes.

The foregoing notes do not cover the whole of the disputed points in relation to the first half of the life of the poet, but they will serve the purpose of suggesting the highly debatable nature of the matter which forms the bulk of his history. They also indicate the difficulties which lie in the path of those who are led to investigate the facts of his life, either out of mere curiosity or for the purposes of a psychological study.







II

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE DOCUMENTS

ACCORDING to an entry in Bishop Whitgift's register,¹ a licence was granted on November 27th, 1582, for a marriage between William Shaxpere and Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton. On the next day a bond² was entered into by Fulk Sandells and John Richardson on the issue of a marriage licence to William Shagspere and Anne Hathwey of Stratford-upon-Avon. Although at first sight this want of agreement appears to justify the opinion that different transactions are referred to, there are good reasons for the belief that both of the records relate to the licence for the poet's marriage, and that the entry in the bishop's register is incorrect, all the available evidence being in favour of the accuracy of the bond upon the points respecting which the descriptions are at variance. As the arguments to be used in support of these views are mainly based upon the ancient regulations, it will be necessary to make a brief reference to the somewhat obscure subject of the practice in vogue at the Worcester Episcopal Registry in Elizabethan times, so far as it throws any light upon the questions raised by various authors.

The common licence, as then issued by the Bishop of

¹ Register No. XXXII, folio 43b. John Whitgift was Bishop of Worcester from 1577 to 1583, when he was translated to Canterbury. As archbishop he was again brought into connection with Shakespeare's affairs. See Appendix, No. VI.

² For descriptions and copies of these documents, see Appendix, Nos. VII, VIII., and XVI. A facsimile of the Shaxpere-Whateley entry is given at p. 21.

Worcester,¹ dispensed with the full publication of banns,² and was generally addressed to the rector, vicar, or curate,³ occasionally by name, of the church designated for the marriage, which was not necessarily in the parish of one of the parties. Shakespeare's licence, so far as can be ascertained, was one of this kind. In three cases recorded in the episcopal registers between 1530 and 1573, licences with special privileges were granted.⁴ One of these was issued on July 3rd, 1571, to members of two well-known Roman Catholic families—Francis Throckmorton, son and heir of John Throckmorton, Knight, and Anne Sutton, *alias* Dudley, one of the heirs of Edward Sutton (Lord Dudley), who received permission to marry, without the proclamation of banns, in any church, chapel, or oratory⁵ in the diocese, by any fit priest.⁶

The second licence of this class was granted on December 11th, 1573,⁷ for the marriage of Thomas Lucy⁸ and Dorothy Arnold in the nave or doorway of any church, chapel, or oratory in the diocese of Worcester to be chosen by them. One proclamation of banns was required. According to the parish register of Charlecote, the marriage was solemnized there on January 27th, 1573-4.

The only other case in which special privileges were granted appears in a mandate issued on September 15th, 1571, to "all and singular Rectors, Vicars, etc.," for the marriage, after

¹ The Archbishop of Canterbury granted common as well as special licences in his Province.

² For the various conditions as to banns inserted in these licences, see Appendix, No. IX.

³ The example of a licence given in the Constitutions of 1597 is addressed to the persons licensed. See Cardwell, *Synodalia*, i. 161.

⁴ After 1573 these particulars are not given in the bishop's register.

⁵ Oratories or private chapels were licensed for Divine service by the bishop. On September 30th, 1445, Thomas Bouse and Elizabeth, his wife, obtained a licence for an oratory (*Licencia celebrandi et oratorio*) in their house at Bouse-Lench. Bishop Carpenter's register, No. XXXII., folio 25a.

⁶ Bishop Bullingham's register, No. XXXII., folio 3b. I have not succeeded in finding the record of this marriage, which may have been first solemnized according to the rites of the old faith.

⁷ Bishop Bullingham's register, folio 9a.

⁸ Son and heir of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote. He afterwards married Constance Kingsmill.

one publication of banns, of Richard Jones, of Areley, clerk, and Joan Wylkes, of Mytton.¹

Upon the issue of a common licence, the following documents were probably prepared :—

(a) An allegation,² to which the applicant was sworn, stating the name, residence, and occupation of each of the parties and of the parents, guardians, or friends giving consent, and the reason why the full publication of banns was to be dispensed with, or why permission was required to marry in a parish which was not the ordinary residence of the bride or bridegroom.

(b) A bond to indemnify the bishop and his officials from any action or suit arising out of the grant of the licence.

(c) A letter from some person of position known to the bishop or his officials and to the parties and their friends, certifying that no impediment existed and that the licence could safely be granted. The assurance of consent was sometimes included in this certificate.³

(d) The licence addressed to the minister of the church in which the ceremony was to be performed.

For biographical purposes the allegation was by far the most important of the series, and it is unfortunate that no record of this kind for a date earlier than 1660–1⁴ has been preserved in the Worcester muniment rooms, which have been too thoroughly searched to encourage the hope that any such document or much of the information it contained will now be recovered.⁵ The form of marriage licence in use in 1582 has not come under my notice. The conditions upon which it

¹ Bishop Bullingham's Register, folio 4b. See Appendix, No. X., for notes on the certificate as to the character of the wives of ministers.

² The earliest marriage allegation preserved at Worcester is dated 1661, but there can be little doubt that similar documents were prepared for the signature of the applicants during Bishop Whitgift's episcopate.

³ For references to and examples of this certificate, see Appendix, No. XXIV.

⁴ Personal search or enquiry has been made at all the episcopal registries in the Province of Canterbury, but I have discovered no earlier allegations than those at the London Diocesan Registry, which commence in 1597. Some of the records at Canterbury are not indexed, and earlier dates may be represented there.

⁵ See Appendix, No. XI.

was usually granted at that period have been gathered from the brief entries in the bishop's registers and from the Constitutions and Canons of 1585, 1597, and 1603. Many of the clauses in the example of a licence set forth in the Canons of 1597 were taken without change from the forms already in use.¹

These and other allied records, such as the "Act," "Deposition," and "Visitation" Books² of the Worcester Consistory Court and the London allegations and "Vicar General's Books,"³ have been of great service in clearing up some of the doubtful points connected with Shakespeare's marriage, more particularly the questions raised by the contradictory terms of the bond and register entry. Although the issue of marriage dispensations commenced in England at an early date,⁴ very few were entered in the episcopal registers at Worcester before the Reformation, and no attempt to give a complete record appears to have been made until 1579, when a separate list of all licences granted by Bishop Whitgift was commenced.⁵

According to these entries, the grants increased from 35 in 1571 to 98 in 1582; but, as there are many bonds for which no corresponding entries are found, it is evident that all have not been placed on record.⁶ The numbers obtained from the two series are, however, sufficiently accurate to show

¹ Cardwell says that the Convocation of 1597 "determined to republish the canons of 1585" (*Synodalia*, i. 147-8). Gibson says of the Canons of 1603: "They are generally taken (and in many places word for word) from Canons and Constitutions which had been made in the reign of Queen Elizabeth: and which being confirmed only for herself, and not expressly for her heirs, are thought to have lost their authority by her death 'till many of 'em had new life given them in these canons of 1603" (*Codex Juris Ecclesiastici*, 1713, i. x.).

² For descriptions of these records, see Appendix, No. XI.

³ The "Vicar General's Books" contain a part of the official acts of the Bishops of London from 1520 to 1684, and are in some respects similar to the Worcester episcopal registers. The London volumes were transferred with the wills to the Principal Probate Registry at Somerset House in 1858.

⁴ See Appendix, No. XII.

⁵ For particulars of other licences entered in these lists, see Appendix, No. VII.

⁶ In 1573 forty-five bonds are filed, and only two licences are entered in the register. In 1582 there are only six bonds for which no licences have been recorded.

that the use of the licence, which had increased during Shakespeare's youth, reached a maximum soon after the year of his marriage, when the numbers were far in excess of those granted for the old part of the diocese at the present day.¹ The causes of this demand for licences in a population less wealthy and less numerous than that now occupying the same area² are not apparent, the principal factors, such as haste and a desire for seclusion, being still operative. Among the contributory causes may be mentioned one that is now almost obsolete, namely the prohibition of marriage after banns at certain seasons of the year,³ and, perhaps, a disposition upon the part of the bishop to assist in obviating the difficulties caused by a restraint the removal of which was not included in his scheme of ecclesiastical reform. That Whitgift's determination to uphold this rule and some necessary safeguards was accompanied by a readiness to mitigate the inconveniences arising from their observance and to make the licence accessible to persons of moderate means⁴ or to those who found it difficult to procure acceptable sureties is indicated by the large number of licences granted during the later years of his occupancy of the see. The requirements of the bond alone must have placed the privilege beyond the reach of many who desired it. The occupations of some of the sureties, as described in the bonds,⁵ are not suggestive of sufficiently ample means to satisfy the registrar as to their ability to meet such penalties as £40 or £100.⁶ It was, no doubt, to meet cases of this kind that the letter or certificate supporting the application was brought into use, for its assurance that the licence could be safely granted rendered the financial position of the surety of less importance, and the bond to some extent a matter of form.

¹ The Archdeaconry of Coventry was added to the diocese in 1836.

² One hundred and thirty-eight marriage licences are entered in the bishop's register for the year 1587. A large decrease in the grants during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century is perhaps partly due to a change in fashion.

³ See Appendix, No. XXVIII.

⁴ I have seen no table of fees of earlier date than that prepared by Archbishop Whitgift in 1597. For marriage licence fees, see Appendix, No. XII.

⁵ Such occupations as chapman, collier, and fisherman are not uncommon.

⁶ Nevertheless, Thomas Whyttington, who was a shepherd to the Hathaways, died possessed of goods and debts valued at £50 1s. 11d.

In the majority of cases the bridegroom with another surety was accepted. In some instances one was deemed sufficient; but here the designation "clerk" or "gentleman" indicates a concession to the more responsible members of society. In some of the bonds three sureties are named, and these probably represent cases in which the financial position of the first two proposed was doubtful or in which a letter of recommendation was not produced.

The bishops possessed ample powers to prevent the use of the licence for irregular marriages; and there ought to have been no difficulty in preventing them; but lax administration led to abuse,¹ and drastic changes were averted only by Archbishop Whitgift's attempts at reform² and the Queen's dislike to the growing and eventually successful interference of Parliament in ecclesiastical matters.³ When proper precautions were neglected before granting a licence which authorized a marriage in a distant parish (where, perhaps, neither the parties nor their circumstances were known), a clandestine ceremony was easily substituted for the more orderly rite solemnized in the presence of friends and neighbours after wholesome publicity had been secured by the full proclamation of banns.⁴ In order to effect a fraudulent marriage in a diocese where lax discipline prevailed, it would not therefore have been difficult to secure the services of persons prepared to run a risk of which similar transactions had taught them to make light, although the sureties were liable to considerable financial loss, and the officiating minister to suspension.⁵ In addition to the partial secrecy secured by dispensing with

¹ See Appendix, No. XII.

² "The Archbishop commonly used to take these warnings of petitions and motions in Parliament touching the Church's affairs; and endeavours were used by his means, in Convocation, to rectify and amend all abuses reasonably complained of" (Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, ii. 377). The 1822 ed. in this and subsequent references.

³ "But the Queen now again found out a way to put some check to the proceedings in Parliament, while they meddled with her bishops and spiritual matters belonging to them" (*Ibid.*, ii. 376).

⁴ For instances of the evasion of the legal publication of banns, see p. 59, and Appendix, No. XXVI.

⁵ Only the existence of a "destructive" impediment would have rendered such a marriage void.

the full publication of banns, some of the clergy occasionally made concessions which rendered nugatory one of the most important safeguards provided by the naming of the place of marriage in the licence, and thus contributed to the further success of a fraud which had imposed upon careless registry officials. One of the results of this species of abuse appears in the records of a suit which occupied the attention of the Worcester Consistory Court for some months before and after the date of Shakespeare's licence. The action was brought by one Thomas Winsor against Agnes White, *alias* Winsor, for the restitution of conjugal rights. It was alleged by the defendant that the marriage had not been properly solemnized by reason of the performance of the ceremony in a farmhouse, instead of the parish church of Grimley,¹ in accordance with the terms of a licence granted on September 22nd, 1576—the year before Whitgift's confirmation as Bishop of Worcester. A strict discipline, securing obedience by the registry officials to the regulations and compliance by the clergy with the terms of the licence, was the only remedy for a state of affairs which caused great scandal in the Church, and endangered the continuance of the right of dispensation. Under Whitgift's stern rule² this obedience to the law was without doubt rigorously exacted. Though a zealous champion of the prerogatives claimed by the Church, that prelate was a consistent reformer of such abuses as those described. He assuredly would not have allowed a general delegation of certain powers to the Chancellor of the diocese to interfere with his personal control³ of a privilege the misuse of which he desired to prevent; nor, when the circumstances stated by the applicant for a licence were unsatisfactory, would he have refrained from the exercise of powers that included the

¹ *Deposition Book*, No. 8, and *Act Book*, No. 4, Worcester Diocesan Registry. The deposition of the offending vicar is given in the Appendix, No. XII.

² Strype refers to "This vigilant and industrious prelate" and his "rigorous government," and gives an instance of his action in the case of a clandestine marriage (*Life of Whitgift*, i. 227, ii. 455).

³ The Bishop of London's personal oversight is indicated by the signature, "Ric: London," in the margin of some of the early allegations.

absolute right to refuse the grant.¹ In 1580 John Fryethe, clerk, was required to enter into a bond, one of the conditions of which forbade him "to marry or cawse to bee maryed any persons at any times prohibited by the ecclesiasticall lawes without free and lawful dispensation from the Ordinary of the diocess of Worcester to him graunted," and stipulates that he "shall not at any other tymes marry any, without axinge the bannes in the churche thre Soundayes or holidayes solely."

Some of the results of his efforts to ensure the judicious grant of licences in the diocese of Worcester appear in the bonds. The consent of the parents of the bride was inserted as a condition for the first time in February 1581-2, a precaution which was followed in January 1582-3, a few weeks after Shakespeare obtained his licence, by an increase in the penalty from £40 to £100. After Whitgift's translation to Canterbury, a similar policy was pursued, and "in some articles to be observed in church matters," drawn up in September 1583, the following clause was inserted: "It is thought expedient that no dispensation be granted for marriage without sufficient and large bonds"; and a form of bond was sent down to the bishops for their guidance.² In 1584 the restraints moved in Convocation by his predecessor³ were passed, and received the royal assent. These were added to and confirmed by the Canons of 1597 and 1603; but abuses, to which the custom of entrusting blank forms of licences to surrogates largely contributed, continued until Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, 26 George II. c. 33, came into operation in 1754.

The evidence by which the Canons of 1585 and 1597 can be shown to have had any bearing upon the practice observed at Worcester in 1582 is not complete; yet there can be little doubt that most of the regulations had been anticipated and put into force by Whitgift before he left the diocese. The

¹ At the present time authorities are not agreed as to the discretionary power of the bishops in granting marriage licences. See letters from Sir Thomas H. Tristram and Chancellor Dibdin, in *The Times* of May 23rd, 25th, and 30th, 1903.

² Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 232.

³ Strype, *Life of Grindal*, p. 587. The 1821 ed. in this and subsequent references.

THE DATE OF SHAKESPEARE'S LICENCE 17

reasons given by the applicant as to the necessity for Shakespeare's licence would therefore be subjected to full investigation, and, the control being in such firm hands, evasion or fraud would have but little chance of remaining undetected.

The preservation of a fairly complete series of bonds and records of dispensations granted at Worcester for some years before and after the date of Shakespeare's licence has made it possible to trace the origin and to give what appears to be the true explanation of some of the discrepancies between the poet's marriage bond and the record of the issue of the marriage licence. In dealing with the difference of one day between the dates, it does not appear to be necessary to attribute either of them to clerical error; for, on comparing the two series of documents for the years 1582 and 1583, it is found that out of the 166 bonds executed during that period, 45 are dated after the register entry, and that the intervals extend from one to ten days. The number and character of these intervals lead to the conclusion, which is supported by other evidence,¹ that the bishop's register lists were compiled from the allegations, and bear the same dates as those documents, which were not necessarily in all cases the dates of the licences. If all the persons concerned in Shakespeare's case attended at the registry, the allegation was probably completed on November 27th, the postponement of the execution of the bond until the next day being, perhaps, due to the lateness of the hour at which the application was made, or one of many other causes. The licence may therefore have been dated on November 27th or 28th, and there is no reason for attaching any importance to the apparent reversal of the dates of the bond and the entry in the bishop's register. It must have occasionally happened that applications were made by persons unacquainted with the regulations, or whose proposed sureties were not acceptable to the officials. To avoid the necessity of a second attendance and consequent delay, or the

¹ If the dates in the parish registers are to be relied upon, two of these marriages were solemnized before the completion of the bond. Forty-seven bonds are dated before the corresponding entry in the bishop's register.

loss of a client with whom the trouble and expense of a second visit to Worcester outweighed the advantages of the licence, the whole of the business may have been at once completed except that relating to the bond. With the disappearance of all the documents but the bond and the register entry was lost much information as to the circumstances under which the application for the licence was made and the parts played by the poet and his father in the marriage preliminaries. Although some of the biographies do indeed contain interesting accounts of the visit to Worcester,¹ nothing is known concerning this part of the licence transaction save the fact that the bond bears the marks of the sureties, Sandells and Richardson. For anything we know to the contrary, all the persons interested, including John Shakespeare, may have attended at the registry to support the application, though there is no evidence that it was necessary for any one of them to undertake the journey to Worcester, except, perhaps, one of the principals or some person of repute who could certify on oath that the consent of the parents or governors had been obtained.²

In the matrimonial case referred to on p. 15, one of the witnesses, John Flavell, of Bromsgrove, who was present at the clandestine ceremony, deposed that he "was one which procured a lycence for the said marriage and standeth bound for the same."³ The bridegroom, Thomas Winsor, a widower, was not one of the sureties; so it may be concluded that he did not personally apply for the licence. The London allegation books contain several cases of the same kind, including one which appears to be, in some respects, similar to Shakespeare's. An application was made at the London Diocesan Registry on February 4th, 1597-8, on behalf of Sir Richard

¹ J. Tom Burgess, *Historic Warwickshire*, edited by J. Hill, pp. 101-2; Charles Knight, *William Shakspeare, A Biography*, 1865, pp. 272-5; Thomas de Quincey, *Shakspeare, A Biography*, pp. 43 and 93.

² See Constitutions of 1597. By Canon 103 (1608), the personal oath of one of the parties licensed is required as well as the oaths of "two sufficient witnesses, one of them to be known to the judge himself, . . . that the express consent of the parent . . . is thereunto had and obtained."

³ *Deposition Book*, No. 3 (October 2nd, 1582), Worcester Diocesan Registry. The bond referred to is dated September 22nd, 1576.

Barkley, for the marriage of his grandson, Richard Barkley, aged 20, with Mary Roe, aged 18. The applicants, Samuel Hare and John Guyse, who exhibited a certificate of consent, were, no doubt, also sureties to the bond.¹ From these examples it is evident that under some circumstances, as for instance when the bridegroom was a minor, and therefore not eligible as a surety, the regulations permitted the application and sworn statement to be made by friends, although such cases were, no doubt, departures from the rule.

Very few of the Worcester bonds were signed by the attesting witnesses: in these documents, with few exceptions, the recurrence of familiar names indicates that they were executed at the registry, or possibly elsewhere, in the presence of one of the officials.² The exceptions furnish no positive evidence that they were not signed at Worcester; but, as the names of the witnesses are not found on documents signed at the registry, and the attestation clause is written in a strange hand and in unfamiliar words, it may be inferred that they were signed elsewhere. For example, the signatures of the sureties to a bond dated September 24th, 1578,³ were attested by four witnesses "and other of Malvern Parva." The bride was a resident in that parish, and the bond was probably executed there.⁴ There is a slight possibility that the Shakespeare bond was signed at Stratford before a notary or surrogate, or on the occasion of a visit by the bishop's registrar or other official to that town—a not unusual occurrence at a time when the Church courts had cognizance of many matters which are now referred to other tribunals. The absence of the attestation clause, however, points to the probability that Sandells and Richardson signed the bond at the Worcester Registry.⁵ Since Shakespeare's personal attendance does not appear to have been absolutely

¹ *Allegation Book*, No. 1, London Diocesan Registry.

² Some of these documents were attested by "Andrew Walker, scribe," who also wrote many of the bonds, including Shakespeare's.

³ Licence to Edward White and Elizabeth Walker.—Bond filed with wills for 1578.—Worcester Probate Registry.

⁴ See Appendix, No. VIII.

⁵ See Appendix, No. XIII.

necessary (he was not eligible as a surety by reason of his minority), it is improbable that time and money were wasted upon a needless journey to Worcester. On the other hand, a temporary stay at or near that city in November 1582, after his departure from Stratford, may have been utilized for the transaction of his part of the licence business and the completion of his marriage with Anne Hathaway.

In the present state of our information it is not expedient to do more than suggest these probabilities, which will be of little assistance to the biographer.

27 November 1582.

*In nomine dei facta omnium suorum in presence of Anna wife of
de Temple parson.*

THE RECORD OF A LICENCE FOR THE MARRIAGE OF WILLIAM SHAXPERE AND ANNE WHATELEY.

(Reproduced from the original entry in Bishop Whiggit's Register—Diocesan Registry, Worcester.)

[To face p. 21.]

III

HATHAWAY OR WHATELEY

THE truth of Rowe's statement that Shakespeare's wife was "the daughter of one Hathaway"¹ was accepted without question until attention was called to the entry in the bishop's register, in which she is described as Anne Whateley. While this discrepancy cannot be said to have seriously disturbed the old belief, some doubt has naturally arisen, and renewed interest has been imported into the debate upon the question of her identity.

Before giving the results of a search among the Worcester diocesan records for a clue to the puzzle, it will, perhaps, be as well to review some of the explanations which the introduction of this new name has brought forth.

In some remarks upon the last edition of *Outlines*, the editor of *Shakespeareana* says: "Its author had in contemplation, for example, a careful investigation of Shakespeare's residence in St. Helen's parish in the old city of London; also to enquire thoroughly into the history of Shakespeare's wife, who, as the discoveries of the last dozen years or so render not at all unlikely, was named Anne or Agnes Whately, instead of Anne (or Ann) Hathaway."² It is not quite clear whether this points to an explanation similar to that suggested by Dr. Karl Elze, who enquires: "Can it be that this entry refers

¹ *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare*, 1709. See *Outlines*, ii. 186, for a reference to an unpublished edition of Rowe's account, in which the names of John and Samuel Hathaway are also mentioned.

² *Shakespeareana*, vii. 27, New York, 1890. See also *Outlines*, ii. 396, note 394.

to Anne Hathaway's first marriage?"¹ In any case all the evidences except that of the bishop's register are in favour of the name given in the bond, "Anne Hathway . . . maiden," which effectually disposes of the theory that she had been previously married. Moreover, if she had been a widow, the consent of her friends would have been unnecessary,² although there are occasional exceptions to this rule, the consenting parties in such cases being described in the Worcester bonds and London allegations as "friends" or "governors," whose protection, in some circumstances, was considered necessary. Mrs. C. H. Dall says: "Anne may have been a ward or niece, and the seal attached to the bond must have been borrowed only. . . . As far as can be inferred from known facts, Anne Hathaway was an orphan, whose connection with Shottery has been assumed. . . . I draw attention to the fact that Anne Hathaway could not have been the daughter of Richard Hathaway of Shottery."³ In a letter to *The Athenæum* of July 17th, 1886, Mr. A. Hall suggested the possibility that "Richard Hathaway, *alias* Gardener of Shottery, who died in 1582, may have married a widow named Whateley from Temple Grafton, which would then be Anne Hathaway's birth-place. . . . This assumption would account for Anne's known seniority to the surviving Hathaways and for her exclusion from the father's will." There is no evidence in favour of this hypothesis; and it may also be urged that, if she had been known by the name of Whateley, *alias* Hathaway,⁴ it might reasonably be looked for in that or the reversed form both in the bond and the register entry, in common with many instances of a like kind in the matrimonial records. In commenting upon Mr. Hall's letter, the editor says: "No amount of ingenuity will ever convert the 'Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton' of one day into the 'Anne Hathaway of Stratford' of

¹ *William Shakespeare*, 1888, p. 73.

² The consent of the parents of widows is specially excepted in the example of a licence given in the Constitutions and Canons of 1597, and again in the 104th Canon of 1603.

³ *What we really know about Shakespeare*, pp. 32, 183, 188-9.

⁴ I am informed that the Rev. T. P. Wadley, who discovered the bishop's register entry, was of the opinion that the name Whateley was an alias.

the next." It is very unlikely, however, that licences were granted to Shakespeare on successive days for his marriage to Anne Whateley and to Anne Hathaway respectively. Even if John Shakespeare's consent to the second proposed marriage could have been obtained, it is difficult to believe that the same or other sureties could have been induced to undertake the responsibility of the second bond in the face of the transactions of the previous day, which were not calculated to give assurance of the absence of impediments or exemption from the penalty. The second application with its unavoidable complications would have excited suspicion at the registry, with the probable result of a refusal of the second licence and, upon further enquiry, the withdrawal of the bishop's sanction to the first.

Dr. Sidney Lee says: "The theory that the maiden name of Shakespeare's wife was Whateley is quite untenable, and it is unsafe to assume that the bishop's clerk, when making a note of the grant of the license in his register, erred so extensively as to write 'Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton' for 'Anne Hathaway of Shottery.' The husband of Anne Whateley cannot reasonably be identified with the poet. He was doubtless another of the numerous William Shakespeares who abounded in the diocese of Worcester."¹ The poet's name was common enough at that time in the Midland counties² to make it possible that on consecutive days two William Shakespeares applied for marriage licences at the Worcester Registry; but, in addition to this coincidence, it would be necessary to assume another almost as curious, in the loss of the Whateley bond and the omission of the Hathaway entry from the bishop's register. That all these things occurred is very improbable, although a bond is not filed for every licence, nor is a licence recorded for every bond.

It has been assumed that the marriage was objectionable to the Shakespeare family and that the name Whateley was

¹ *A Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 23, 24.

² The name "William Shakespeares" appears in the Rowington list of the "trained shouldiers . . . taken at Alcester" in 1605. State Papers printed in Ryland's *Records of Rowington*, p. 187.

used for the purpose of deception. This explanation fails upon two grounds: John Shakespeare could not have been ignorant of the identity of the woman to whose marriage with his son he had formally given a consent, without which the licence could not have been obtained; and it would be necessary to assume that the registry officials were very easily imposed upon, or that they were in collusion with the applicants, and deliberately issued a licence in a name different from that given in the bond, the object of which would have been thereby defeated. Mr. Joseph Hill, in some notes in his edition of *Historic Warwickshire*, says: "The word 'Whateley' shows that the original off-hand memorandum in some draft or rough book for subsequent entry in the Registry was not made with care; it contains, in fact, three inaccuracies—the date, the name and the parish. The original in Latin would be 'Annam Hathwey,' and when some days subsequently it was entered in the register by a neat copyist, he mistook the 'm' for 'w' and the small and capital 'h' being precisely alike he would be easily misled, particularly as it was an invariable habit at that period to curtail the terminal of a name, whilst the first stroke of 'w' was formed by many writers like the letter 't'"¹

Although there is no proof of the existence of a rough draft of the register at the date of Shakespeare's licence, such a book appears to have been kept at one period for the use of the scribe who made the entries. During Hurd's episcopate a number of loose sheets, upon which were recorded some of the official acts of several bishops from 1516 to 1542, were formed into a volume—now Number XXVII. of the series of registers. The earlier memoranda bear the appearance of having been carelessly written, and some of the paragraphs are interlined; but towards the end of the volume the pages become a fair duplicate on paper of the register, which was written on vellum.² At this stage it may have occurred to the registrar, perhaps with a view to economies, which at that

¹ *Historic Warwickshire*, by J. Tom Burgess, p. 102.

² Similar duplicates of portions of the episcopal registers are preserved at Hereford.

period of the Reformation were somewhat pressing,¹ that, since the draft could be as neatly compiled as the register, it was advisable to dispense with such a duplication of the work. There are now no means of ascertaining whether this draft was continued until 1582.

Indistinct writing in an allegation prepared without previous drafting would make a mistake such as Mr. Hill suggests comparatively easy; but as neither that document nor rough draft nor temporary memorandum has been preserved at the Worcester Registry, there is no satisfaction in discussing the quality of the penmanship. From the appearance of the London allegations, which were written in a book, there can be but little doubt that many of them were prepared without the intervention of anything more than, possibly, a memorandum of the names and descriptions of the parties.² There are frequent erasures and interlineations, and the following example appears to support the idea that these documents were sometimes written directly from a verbal statement. On December 19th, 1597, Thomas Sturgis appeared personally before Doctor Stanhope, and applied for a licence for the marriage of Nicholas Tillman and Margaret Sturgis, both of the city of London.³ After giving other particulars, the allegation, which is without signatures, comes to an end with the words, "and he further allegeth," thus indicating that the answer to some question was not satisfactory, and so the transaction—for that time, at any rate—was ended.⁴ Without some additional knowledge of the routine of the Worcester Registry in Shakespeare's day, it is impossible to decide the question as to the nature of the document from which the register list of licences was compiled, though the evidence appears to be in favour of

¹ "The revenues and incomes of the Bishopricks had been so stript by their immediate Popish predecessors that the present [1559] Bishops were in want even of Convenience and Necessaries, for Housekeeping" (Strype, *History of the Reformation*, pp. 158-9).

² This is the present practice at Worcester, and may be a survival.

³ *Allegation Book*, No. 1, London Diocesan Registry.

⁴ Some of the incomplete entries in the Worcester episcopal registers suggest the probability that the scribe sometimes copied and failed to cancel the particulars from allegations that were left in an unfinished condition. See "John Wise," June 14th, 1581, folio 39b, Bishop Whitgift's register.

the conclusion that the name "Whateley" was entered from a temporary memorandum or from the allegation.

This simple method of solving the problem seems to have fallen into disrepute through having been too freely used in dealing with the difficult questions frequently met with in attempting to write the poet's history. Mr. Appleton Morgan says: "Shakespeare study is fast being guided by modern students into paths of common sense, and the convenient presumption that everything not accordant with the 'glib biographer' of the greatest Englishman who ever lived was a 'clerical error' is about to be pensioned off for ever."¹ However just this criticism may be in some cases, the proved frequency of the errors in the documents in question renders it necessary that they should be taken into account in endeavouring to explain discrepancies. In the present instance the objection can be met by reference to similar mistakes in the work of the same scribe, and there also appears to me to be a clue to the manner in which "Whateley" came to be substituted for the proper name of Shakespeare's bride.

Disregarding the minor orthographic eccentricities frequently found in these documents, such as the substitution of "Hiccox" for "Hitchcocke" (Whitgift's Register, folio 52*b*), the following examples taken from the bonds and the bishop's register list of licences may be cited as proof of incorrectness in transcribing, or errors in the documents from which the lists were compiled. On December 17th, 1582, a bond was entered into for a licence granted to John Baker and Joan Barbar: the bride's name is erroneously entered in the bishop's register (folio 51*a*) as Baker. The bridegroom's name, in a bond dated November 25th, 1583, is Robert Bradeley: in the bishop's register (folio 53*b*) the name is Robert Darby. In a bond dated January 7th, 1583-4, the bridegroom's name is Humfrey Elcock: in the bishop's register (folio 54*a*) his name is written Humfrey Edgock.² In the last two cases the bridegrooms

¹ *Shakespeare in Fact and in Criticism*, p. 277.

² The bonds are filed with wills proved in the years 1582 and 1583. Probate Registry, Worcester.

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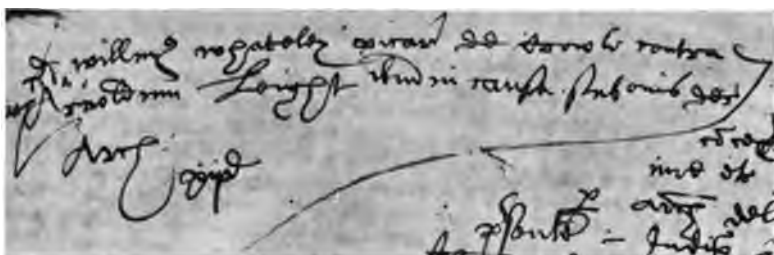
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27 November 1582.



THE ENTRY IN WHICH WILLIAM WHATELEY IS NAMED IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF
THE CONSISTORY COURT.

(Reproduced from the original in Act Book No. 4, Diocesan Registry, Worcester.)

[To face p. 27.]

are sureties, and the names occur more than once, and with signatures, thus testifying to the correctness of the bonds. The origin of the suggestion of the name "Whateley" to the mind of the scribe can, of course, be only a matter for conjecture; but familiarity with the word by reason of its frequent occurrence in the contemporary business of the registry, combined with the resemblance to "Hathaway" mentioned by Mr. Hill, would probably be sufficient to account for the substitution. A search among the Consistory Court records resulted in my discovery of the name on several occasions during the years 1582 and 1583, the recurrence being frequent enough to make the registry officials familiar with it. In a record of the proceedings of a court held on November 27th, 1582, the date of Shakespeare's licence, the suit of William Whateley, vicar of Crowle, against Arnold Leight for the non-payment of tithes, was one of the forty cases dealt with; and it was also before the court on subsequent occasions.¹ The name is again found in the same Act Book in a defamation suit: "Samuel Nyfache, gentleman, against William Whateley of Henley," March 21st, 1582-3.

William Whateley, vicar of Crowle, the plaintiff in the tithe case, was the only surety in a bond dated June 21st, 1583, executed on the issue of a licence for the marriage of John Combes, of Stratford, gentleman, and Elizabeth Kinneraley, gentlewoman, and other references to the name occur in the court records and other documents of the period.²

It is difficult to determine from the appearance of the writing at what intervals the entries in the bishop's register were made; but, whether daily or otherwise, the name Whateley was before the scribes both on the day of the issue of Shakespeare's marriage licence and for several months afterwards.³ It therefore appears probable that the occurrence of this name

¹ *Act Book*, No. 4, Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

² Apart from the entry in the bishop's register, the name Whateley is not found in connection with the poet's affairs.

³ I have not met with the name Hathaway in any of the diocesan records other than the marriage licence bond, although the name was then common in the diocese.

in the bishop's register is due to an error, the origin of which may be traced to indistinct writing in one of the original documents, probably the allegation, together with the scribe's remembrance of a name frequently under his notice and having some similarity to that for which it was substituted.¹

That Shakespeare's wife was closely akin to the Hathaways of the Hewland farm, Shottery, and at one time resided at the cottage to which her maiden-name has been given, seems to admit of little doubt. In the will of Thomas Whittington,² formerly shepherd to Richard Hathaway of Shottery,³ is the following bequest: "unto the poor people of Stratford xl^s that is in the hand of Anne Shaxspere wyffe unto Mr. Wylliam Shaxspere, and is due debt unto me, being paid to mine executor by the said Willyam Shaxspere or his assigns according to the true meanyng of this my will." In a schedule at the foot of the will are more debts "due to me the said testator," including amounts owing by other members of the Hathaway family: "Imp^s John Hathway and Wylliam Hathway executors unto the late decessed Jone Hathway theyr mother⁴ do owe me that is due to me by her last will iiij marks iiij^s viij^d; It. the sayd John and Wylliam Hathway owe me more lv^s vij^d. It. the foresayd John Hathway oweth me more iiij^s iiij^d. It. the sayd Wylliam Hathway oweth me iiij^s." The schedule of debts is followed by this memorandum, "It: I owe the sayd John and Wylliam Hathway for a quarter of an yeares bord." With the exception of the amount due from William Shakespeare the above sums are referred to in the inventory (exhibited with the will) as "desperate debts,"⁵ the total of which amounts to £20 ls. 7d.⁶

¹ See Appendix, No. XIV.

² The will is dated March 25th, 1601, and was proved on April 29th, 1601.

³ "The son, no doubt, of the John who was the customary tenant of the Shottery estate from April 1543, to October 1556, and perhaps for some time afterwards" (*Outlines*, ii. 362, note 292).

⁴ This testatrix was the widow of the above-named Richard Hathaway, who died in September 1581.

⁵ Desperate = great, as distinguished from the small debts.

⁶ The sum of 40s. in the hands of Anne Shakespeare is not included in this total.

The smaller sums due from John and William Hathaway may have been received from Whittington, who appears to have lived with the family up to the date of his death, on account of his "bord," and the sum for which the poet was liable may have been placed in Mrs. Shakespeare's hands for safety.¹ If the money had been advanced to her as a loan² rendered necessary by her husband's poverty or his absence in London, it would probably have been repaid long before Whittington's death in 1601, for Shakespeare purchased New Place in 1597. The association of Mrs. Shakespeare's name with the names of other members of the Hathaway family in the financial transactions described in Thomas Whittington's will³ is very suggestive; but further evidence is required to prove that she was the daughter of the Richard Hathaway whose burial on September 7th, 1581, is recorded in the Stratford parish register.⁴

In order to meet the difficulty arising from the omission of Anne's name from Richard Hathaway's will,⁵ it has been suggested that she is therein referred to as Agnes, and that the two names were, at that period, sometimes interchangeable. The matrimonial suit of Winsor *versus* White affords an example of the convertible use of Anne and Agnes. In the numerous instances in which that case is mentioned in the Act and Deposition books of the Consistory Court, as well as in the bond entered into upon the issue of a licence for the marriage of the parties, the woman's name is given as Anne, except in the heading of her own deposition, dated June 28th, 1582, in which she is named Agnes.⁶ The name in this form is not, however, found in any undoubted reference to the

¹ The inventories filed with the wills show that such transactions were very common at that period.

² See Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 187; W. Carew Hazlitt, *Shakespeare*, p. 42.

³ The eldest son, Bartholomew, is not mentioned in this list of debtors to Whittington's estate.

⁴ For an account of the Hathaway families, see *Outlines*, ii. 183-98 and 362.

⁵ For a copy of this will, see Appendix, No. XV.

⁶ *Deposition Book*, No. 8.

poet's wife, although she is named three times in the licence bond, and once respectively in the bishop's register, in Thomas Whittington's will, in the parish register of burials, and on her tombstone. The reference in the bond to Stratford-upon-Avon as Anne's residence is considered to be inconsistent with the belief that she was a member of one of the Shottery families.¹ That this is no serious objection is proved by the fact that in the whole of the bonds for the years 1582 and 1583 the places of residence of the bride, bridegroom, and the sureties are ecclesiastical parishes or parochial chapelries, and there is no instance in which a hamlet or township is mentioned, although many such places as Shottery would undoubtedly have been named if the abodes had been more minutely described.² In the Shakespeare marriage licence bond both Sandells and Richardson are described as of Stratford, although the former and probably also the latter resided at Shottery. A feature of the bond which may be turned to account in the search for information appears in the choice of the words used in describing the status of the persons giving consent to the marriage. Some of the variations may be due to caprice, but most of them can be regarded as applicable to particular cases, and the various classes may be thus specified: 1, Parents; 2, Parents and friends, governors, or guardians; 3, Friends or governors; 4, Friends.³

The last of these appears to have been purposely used to express the relation of Anne Hathaway to those whose consent to the marriage had been obtained, as in the following example selected from the London allegations: "January 11th, 1597-8 . . . William Millington . . . and Alice Flud . . . which maiden hath nether father nor mother living being of the age of xxxi. yeres . . . and that the said intended

¹ See J. P. Collier, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, etc., i. 67.

² In taking a wider range, occasional but rare references to the Stratford townships are found.

³ In twenty-one out of the 164 bonds executed at Worcester during the years 1582 and 1583, consent is given by "friends" only; but, as eight of these bonds are dated October and November 1582, it is just possible that the recurrence of the phrase may in some cases be due to the scribe's temporary preference for the same.

marriage is with the consent and good liking of all her friends . . . and they both alleged by virtue of their oaths that she is wholly at her own government and hath her portion in her own hands."¹ According to this interpretation of the words "her friends," in the Shakespeare bond, Anne Hathaway was an orphan of full age and "wholly at her own government." Joan Hathaway, Richard's widow and sole executrix, was living at the date of the licence, so that her consent,² as the surviving parent, would have been required if Anne had been her daughter, and consent would not therefore have been confined to the friends mentioned in the bond.

With the exception of the absence of the name Anne from Richard Hathaway's will,³ and of the name Agnes from all undoubted references to Shakespeare's wife, there is nothing in the traditional or other evidence against the theory that she was Richard's daughter. Both Anne and Bartholomew may have been his children by a former marriage, in which case Joan, his widow, and Bartholomew, his son, the only one then of age, would, without having any legal control, be properly considered the bride's "friends" according to the regulations then in force.

In connection with the hypothesis that Agnes, Bartholomew, and perhaps others may not have been Joan's children, it is interesting to observe the care with which Bartholomew's interest in a half yard land, mentioned in Richard Hathaway's will, is safeguarded against the failure by his widow to carry out the testator's directions. It is also suggestive of a more distant relationship than that of mother and son between Joan and Bartholomew Hathaway, that the former is referred to only as "my wife." "And my will is that he, the same Bartholomewe shall be a guide to *my saide wife* in hir husbandrye. And also a comforte unto *his bretherne and sisters* to his power." The omission of the words "his mother" from these clauses

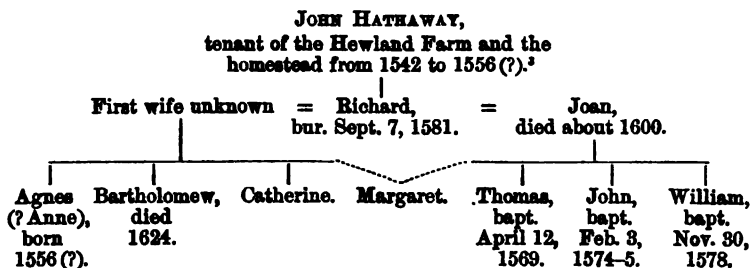
¹ No. 1 *Allegation Book*, London Diocesan Registry. Examples of the remainder are given in the Appendix, No. XXIV.

² There is no evidence that this consent was refused or that the interference of the Consistory Court was sought.

³ A copy of Richard Hathaway's will is given in the Appendix, No. XV.

seems to be intentional. Moreover, the exclusion of Bartholomew from the executorship of Joan Hathaway's will, as indicated by the names of her executors in the inventory to Thomas Whittington's will, would have been very unusual if Bartholomew had been her eldest son.¹ In Robert Arden's will there is a similar reference to his daughter by his first wife. He made a bequest to his second wife on condition that she allowed his "dowghter Ales quyetye to ynjoye halfe my copy-houlde in Wyllmcote."²

The argument will, perhaps, be made clearer by a reference to the following conjectural pedigree of the Hathaway family of Shotton :—



A suggestion that Weston-on-Avon was the home of Anne's parents is not supported by any evidence. The Weston parish registers do not commence until 1685. Other variations of this pedigree may, however, be suggested. If the age on Anne Shakespeare's tombstone is correct, she was born about 1556, at which date John Hathaway was still tenant of the Hewland farm; so that she may have been his daughter, and therefore Richard's sister. This would explain the omission of her name from Richard Hathaway's will, and is in agreement with the tradition that she resided at the house now known as Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

Joan Hathaway survived her husband for many years, and

¹ See p. 28.

² For a copy of Robert Arden's will, see Appendix, No. XXXV.

³ See *Outlines*, ii. 190.

is referred to in a list of debts in the will of Thomas Whittington, dated March 25th, 1601, as "the late deceased Jone Hathaway." Her burial is not entered in that name in the Stratford parish register; and I have not succeeded in finding her will, which may have been proved in the Stratford Peculiar Court, as it is not at the Worcester Registry. She may not, however, have resided at the Hewland farm, or even in the diocese of Worcester, up to the date of her death.¹ It is also possible that she married again, although she is referred to as Joan Hathaway in the inventory attached to Whittington's will. Among the proofs cited in favour of Anne's close relationship to the family of Richard Hathaway of Shottery are the facts that the two sureties to the marriage bond are both named in his will (Sandells "my trustie friend and neighbour" as supervisor,² and Richardson as a witness), that the poet's wife is referred to in the will of Thomas Whittington, who was shepherd to Richard Hathaway,³ and that Lady Barnard, who was Shakespeare's grand-daughter, named in her will the daughters of her kinsman, Thomas Hathaway. Further confirmation is supposed to have been found in the letters impressed upon one of the seals formerly attached to the marriage licence bond. Many writers who are not prepared to accept the conclusion that Anne was therefore the daughter of Richard Hathaway of Shottery, or that the marriage preliminaries were under the immediate control of the Hathaway family, yet appear to take it for granted that the letters on the seal were R.H.⁴

This reading cannot, however, be accepted, for, though there is no description of the seal in its perfect state,⁵ there is strong presumptive evidence that the second letter was "K," and

¹ See *Outlines*, ii. 188-90.

² A supervisor was, at one time, appointed to see that the duty of the executors was duly performed.

³ See p. 28.

⁴ See J. C. M. Bellew, *Shakespeare's Home at New Place*, pp. 31 and 132; J. Tom Burgess, *Historic Warwickshire*, 1892-3, p. 102; Karl Elze, *William Shakespeare, A Literary Biography*, 1888, p. 72; H. S. and C. W. Ward, *Shakespeare's Town and Times*, 1895, p. 99; *Outlines*, ii. 184.

⁵ I cannot ascertain whether Sir Thomas Phillipps, who discovered the bond, left any notes on the subject of the seals.

that the seal was in common use at the Registry for some years.¹ The seals were probably intact when discovered in 1836; but the wax, friable with age, and subject to much careless handling after the bond was removed from the leather thongs upon which it was originally filed, had by 1860 so far crumbled away that the impressions were indecipherable; and nothing remained in 1885, when the bond was enclosed between sheets of glass and framed. The second seal, as figured in 1848 by J. O. Halliwell-Phillips (then J. O. Halliwell),² was much damaged. In the later editions of his *Outlines*, including that of 1887, a little more of the second letter is shown; and this more perfect sketch no doubt correctly represents what remained of the seal when the first drawing was made.³ In any case, the difference between the two figures proves either that the first was incorrectly drawn, or that the later of two sketches, representing the seal at different stages of destruction, was inserted in the earlier edition. It may be argued that the letter without the right upper limb is an old form of H; but I know of no sixteenth-century capital of that shape. Figures of the seal are given by other writers,⁴ but none of these shows that portion of the letter which betrays its original form. The perfect seals and the better preserved fragments now remaining on the bonds for the years 1582 and 1583 prove that at least thirty per cent. bore the impressions of a tree "eradicated" and the letters R.K.⁵ as figured opposite, the two being generally found together on bonds in which two or more sureties are named.

The similarity of the two seals figured in the later

¹ Occasionally the letters and devices are impressions of seals belonging to the sureties. The bond signed by Richard Southam, Vicar of Charlecote, bears the letters "R.S."

² *The Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 112.

³ Above and below the letters in the perfect "R.K." seals there is an ornamental flourish which appears only below in the figures by Halliwell-Phillips. This helps to identify the original from which the letters were drawn.

⁴ Charles Knight, *William Shakspeare, A Biography*, 1865, p. 278; *A Shakspeare Memorial* (Boston), 1864, p. 4; James Walter, *Shakspeare's True Life*, 1890, p. 183.

⁵ The owner of the "R.K." seal was probably one of the officials of the court or a scribe, whose name I have not found in the records.



A GROUP OF SEALS SIMILAR TO THOSE FORMERLY ATTACHED TO SHAKESPEARE'S
MARRIAGE LICENCE BOND.

*(Reproduced from bonds, executed in the year 1582, filed with wills now in the
Probate Registry, Worcester.)*

[To face p. 34.]



editions of *Outlines* to those in common use by the Registry officials at the date of Shakespeare's licence proves that the letter in question was not H., and that the seal is of no value as evidence in the enquiry as to Anne Hathaway's identity.



IV

TEMPLE GRAFTON

IF, as seems certain, the Shaxpere-Whateley paragraph in Bishop Whitgift's Register is a record of the issue of the poet's marriage licence, then either the insertion of Temple Grafton must be an error or the entry is incomplete, for there is no reason to doubt that Anne Hathaway is correctly described in the bond as of Stratford-upon-Avon. The first is probably the correct solution; for the second could be accepted only if some such words as "in the church of" had preceded the name of the parish in the earliest matrimonial entry in the list of licences, and were understood to be afterwards omitted for the sake of brevity.¹ Amongst the attempts to explain this point of difference between the bond and the bishop's register is the suggestion that Temple Grafton was the residence of one Anne Whateley, for whose marriage with a namesake of the poet a licence is supposed to have been granted.² This does not, however, appear to be a satisfactory explanation; and it becomes necessary to ascertain the meaning intended to be conveyed by the place-name with which most of these licence-entries terminate. For this purpose, I have examined the matrimonial records in the Worcester Diocesan and Probate Registries³ from May 15th, 1530, to March 31st, 1585, after which latter date marriage licences are not recorded in the bishop's registers. Before 1578 the licences are entered consecutively

¹ The beginning of each paragraph is abbreviated in a similar manner.

² On this subject see Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 24.

³ The marriage bonds for this period were filed with the wills, and are now, with a few exceptions, at the Probate Registry.

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with other episcopal acts; and most of the entries give some of the conditions upon which the licences were granted, with the name or title of the minister directed to perform the ceremony and the name and residence of each of the parties. From 1579¹ to 1584 inclusive, the licences of several kinds granted by the bishop are entered in a separate list; and the matrimonial items contain a date, the names of the parties, and the name of one parish which, at first sight, appears to be the residence of both, but which could not have been inserted as such, since it can be proved from the bonds that in many instances they resided in different parishes. The characteristic defects of these entries appear at an early date. No place of abode is named in the record of the first licence issued in 1530;² and other particulars are occasionally omitted, a residence being sometimes vaguely given as "the diocese of Worcester." Between August 1571 and July 1577, the place of marriage is omitted from at least thirty per cent. of the entries, and in many cases the bridegroom's residence is not given, leaving it beyond doubt that such omissions had become a common practice before the discontinuance of the old system of registration in 1577.³

These defective entries appear, very curiously, to have been taken as precedents by the writer of the lists commencing in 1579. Only one parish is named in each paragraph, and there are indications that this was not entered as the place of marriage. A search in the registers of the specified parishes for the years 1582 and 1583 resulted in the discovery of only sixty-two per cent. of the marriages.⁴ As there are very good reasons for assuming that marriages were not, at that time, celebrated elsewhere than at the one church named in the licence, the failure to find a larger number is against the theory that the parish named in the Shaxpere-Whateley paragraph

¹ The licences for 1578 are not entered.

² In this case the place of marriage is found in the corresponding entry in the draft register.

³ Examples showing the evolution of the brief memoranda in the lists from the earlier and more complete entries are given in the Appendix, No. XVI.

⁴ See Appendix, No. XVII.

was intentionally entered as the place appointed for the ceremony.¹ The record of a licence dated July 26th, 1581, terminates as follows: "inter Willelmum Cryspe et Suzanna Webbe *parochie* S^t Martini Wigorn;"² and, as there was only one church in that parish, there can be no doubt that the parish was inserted as the place of residence. On comparing the licence entries for 1582 and 1583 with the bonds in which the residences are given, it was found that, with very few exceptions, the parish in the bishop's register was the residence of the bride, and that in all but two of these exceptional cases the substituted parish was either the residence of the bridegroom or of one of the sureties or else the place of marriage.³

From the foregoing facts it may be inferred that the terminal place-name in the lists of marriage licences was in all cases intended as the residence of the bride, and that Temple Grafton was probably copied in error from the allegation, in which it may have appeared as the residence of one of the persons concerned in the application for Shakespeare's licence, or as the church named for his marriage. Which of these places was substituted for Anne Hathaway's parish?

So far as can be ascertained, her nearest relatives resided at Shottery; and it is improbable that the consent of friends other than those mentioned in Richard Hathaway's will was required, unless my suggestion as to his first marriage is correct,⁴ in which case the bride's nearest maternal relative, who may have resided at Temple Grafton, would probably have been named as joining in the consent.⁵

Every surety is carefully described in the first part of the bonds; but, as Shakespeare was a minor, and therefore not eligible as a surety, his residence and occupation are absent

¹ See J. T. Burgess, *Historic Warwickshire*, edited by Joseph Hill, pp. 92 and 102.

² Bishop Whitgift's Register, folio 396.

³ In the two remaining entries, including Shakespeare's, the substituted parish cannot be traced. The particulars of these exceptional cases are given in the Appendix, No. XVIII.

⁴ See p. 31.

⁵ See A. Hall's explanation of the name "Whateley" quoted on p. 22.

from the only place in which it was the custom at the Worcester Registry to give those particulars in a trustworthy manner, for the descriptions in the second part of the bond are frequently imperfect. A bridegroom described as a surety is generally referred to in the second part as "the above bounden;" and a superficial reading gives the impression that, when neither these words nor a separate description occurs, as in Shakespeare's case, he was therefore of the same parish as the bride.

When the information can be obtained from the various documents, it is found that the cases in which the parties resided in the same or in different parishes are almost equal in number.¹ Somewhat the same proportion should be maintained when the bridegroom was not a surety; but another residence is so rarely given as to lead to the conclusion that in many cases it has been omitted. The defects of this part of the bond are indicated also by frequent omissions of the residence of the bride, by the large number of cases in which it is not stated whether she was a maiden or a widow, and by the fact that in only three instances is the occupation of a non-surety bridegroom inserted.² The last word of the clause in which Anne Hathway is described as "of Stratford in the dioces of Worcester maiden" is in itself a sufficient proof that the whole of it refers exclusively to the bride, and that the description of William Shakespeare terminates with the words "thone ptie."³ It is difficult to account for the absence of so large a proportion of the residences from the bond; but many of the omissions appear to be due to a failure on the part of the scribe to observe that the parties lived in different parishes. In Shakespeare's case the omission is disappointing in view of the possibility that he had left Stratford at the date of the licence.

¹ For the purpose of this comparison the parish named in the bishop's register is taken to be the bride's residence when it is not specified in the bond.

² These particulars are taken from the 166 bonds executed during the years 1582 and 1583.

³ A comma placed after these words, and rarely found in that position, separates them from the remainder of the sentence.

Whether Temple Grafton was the poet's residence depends upon the remote possibility that it was the place at which he made his venture as a schoolmaster in his younger years,¹ or upon the chance that his father lived there at the date of the licence.

Beyond the reference in the bishop's register, there is no known mention of Temple Grafton in connection with the poet's family;² but there is the possibility that John Shakespeare had a farm there, and was described as of that parish³ in the allegation, which he may have signed as the applicant for his son's licence or as consenting to the marriage. In commenting upon the changes in John Shakespeare's circumstances, Charles Knight says: "We hold, then, that in the year 1578, John Shakspeare, having become more completely an agriculturist—a yeoman as he is described in a deed of 1579—ceased, for the purposes of business, to be an occupier within the borough of Stratford."⁴ A temporary retirement from the town is also mentioned by Dr. Karl Elze⁵ as likely. But John Shakespeare is described in the deed dated October 15th, 1579, and in a bond of the same date as of Stratford-upon-Avon, Yeoman.⁶

In common with most of the contemporary memorials of Shakespeare's early years, time appears to have effectually removed any record of the place of his marriage, and no reference is made to it by the older writers. The many unsuccessful searches which have been made in the parishes of the old diocese of Worcester preclude any hope that the register is now in existence. The ceremony may have been performed in one of the churches in which the ancient volumes

¹ *Aubrey*. There is nothing to connect this with Temple Grafton.

² Halliwell-Phillips says there were Shakespeares at Temple Grafton in the 16th century. *Outlines*, ii. 252, note 9. For a short description of Temple Grafton see Appendix, No. XIX.

³ The insertion of Snitterfield in the administration bond of February 10th, 1560-1, as the residence of John Shakespeare, may have been due to a similar cause. See p. 99.

⁴ William Shakspeare, *A Biography*, 1865, p. 108.

⁵ William Shakespeare, *A Literary Biography*, p. 92.

⁶ These documents are in the Birthplace Museum at Stratford-upon-Avon.

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have been preserved; for the possibility of an omission, not unusual in the early days of parish registers, should be taken into account in any argument founded upon the failure to discover the desired entry at Stratford or any other place where, for certain reasons, it might be expected to exist.¹ It is, however, more probable that the marriage was recorded in one of the many registers the loss of which there is frequent occasion to deplore.

It has been stated that, in Shakespeare's time, the place of marriage could be selected from three churches named in the licence, and that even a wider choice was sometimes allowed. In some remarks upon the poet's marriage, Mr. William Winter says: "The law in those days prescribed that the marriage bond should designate three parishes within the residential diocese, in any one of which the marriage might be made; but the custom in those days permitted the contracting parties, when they had complied with this legal requirement, to be married in whatever parish, within the diocese, they might prefer. Three parishes were named in the Shakespeare marriage bond. The registers of two of them have been searched, and searched in vain. The register of the third—that of Luddington, which is close by Shottery—was destroyed long ago, in a fire that burnt down Luddington Church."² The bond, however, contains no reference to the church appointed for the marriage, the only parish named being Stratford-upon-Avon, the residence of the sureties and of Anne Hathaway.

On the subject of this choice of the place of marriage, Mr. G. R. French writes: "The following explanation of the law in respect of such a bond, . . . has been given by the Compiler's esteemed friend, Henry Charles Coote, Esq., F.S.A., of Doctor's Commons, well known to be a profound archæologist, as he is a sound Canon lawyer: 'The practice concerning marriage in times preceding Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1754,

¹ See Appendix, No. XX.

² *Gray Days and Gold*, 1899, p. 99. See also H. W. Mabie, *William Shakespeare, Poet, Dramatist and Man*, p. 85.

was this : the person applying for the license selected at hazard the names of three parishes, in any of which the license was to authorize the solemnization of the marriage, and the license issued accordingly. This practice prevailed in the great offices of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Faculty and Vicar-General's Offices ; and this rule would be followed by the diocesan registries.¹ This, however, was not all ; the insertion of the names of the three parishes in the license was not considered as binding the persons to be married at any one of them. They more often were married at some totally different parish.'"²

This rule may have existed at one time in the two offices of the Archbishop ; but the assumption that it was in force in the diocesan registries in 1582 is not supported by the evidence of the records at Worcester and some other places. At Worcester there was not only an absence of the latitude described by Mr. Coote, but the earlier matrimonial entries that give the place of marriage state that the ordinary licence or mandate was addressed to the minister of one parish only. After 1573, with two exceptions, no information as to the place of marriage is given in the bishop's registers at Worcester ; but these exceptions indicate that the practice of naming only one church continued until long after the date of Shakespeare's licence. In a deposition in the case of *Winsor v. White*, the Rev. Robert Robinson stated that he solemnized the marriage "*by virtue of a licence granted to him.*"³ One of the entries in the bishop's register list of licences for the year 1580 is as follows : "Item vicesimo die ejusdem Julij licencia matrimonij inter . . .⁴ et Luciam Sheldon de Abberton emanavit vicario de Honington." In a footnote on a bond dated May 6th, 1598, it is stated (in words identical with the termination of one of the register entries dated September 9th, 1571) that a licence

¹ The Archbishop of Canterbury, through his Faculty Office, granted licences for the Province of York as well as Canterbury, and, through his Vicar-General's office, for the Province of Canterbury only.

² *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, p. 558.

³ See Appendix, No. XII.

⁴ The name of the bridegroom is omitted.

for the marriage of Simon Jukes and Margaret Pitt, of Wolverley, was addressed to the vicar of that place.¹

Two kinds of common licences were granted by the Bishop of London, the ordinary licence in which one church was named for the marriage, and a "general" licence allowing it to take place in any church in the diocese. The general licence was freely granted before the year 1570, after which date the numbers began to decrease, and very few are recorded after the year 1597.² Only one church is named in each of the London allegations up to the end of the sixteenth century. In the first allegation, dated December 7th, 1597, for a licence granted to Symon Sell, of Little Hadham, and Elizabeth Hyde, of St. Andrew's Undershaft, the place of marriage is not named,³ but on referring to the record of the grant in the *Vicar-General's Books*, it is found that the licence was addressed to the rector and curate of St. Andrew's Undershaft, one of whom is directed to perform the ceremony. I have not inspected the register of that parish to ascertain whether the marriage is entered, for there is nothing in the terms of the licence to warrant the supposition that the marriage could be legally solemnized elsewhere. Any departure from these terms, such as might be indicated by the absence of the record of certain marriages from the register of the parish named in the licence, was no doubt due to irregularities for which the minister who performed the ceremony and his bishop were alone responsible.

As at Worcester, so at London, the difference between the conditions upon which the special and the ordinary licences were granted is clearly set forth. On November 19th, 1582, a special licence was issued by the bishop to "all and singular Rectors, etc.," for the marriage of Robert Baker and Alice

¹ Bundle of Wills, etc., for the year 1598. Worcester Probate Registry.

² These are termed "General licences" by Dr. J. L. Chester. See his *London Marriage Licences, 1520 to 1610—Publications of the Harleian Society*, vol. 25. Occasionally the records of the grants in the "Vicar-General's Books" contain no reference to the place of marriage, and it has been supposed that in these cases "general" licences were issued. The church in which the parties desired permission to be married is, however, generally to be found in the corresponding allegations.

³ The place of marriage is not named in some of the earlier allegations, but is found in the corresponding entries in the *Vicar-General's Books*.

Straunge; and on the next day (a week before the date of Shakespeare's licence), an ordinary licence was issued to the Curate of St. Bartholomew, near the Royal Exchange, for the marriage of Richard Hathewaye¹ and Anne Maddoxe.²

In some licence bonds at the Lincoln Diocesan Registry dated 1588, only one church is named for the marriage, and the same restriction is usually found in the earliest allegations which are dated 1598. A few years later a choice from the parishes of the bride and bridegroom was occasionally allowed.

These examples prove the continuity of the practice during the last fifty years of the sixteenth century, and there appears to be no evidence in favour of the contention that the common licence issued at the Worcester Registry in 1582 permitted the selection of the place of marriage from three specified churches, or that, unless a special licence was granted, William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway were allowed any other privilege than that of dispensing with the full publication of banns and the selection of a church in the diocese for the marriage.³ A good reason would no doubt have been required if the church proposed had not been in the parish of the poet or his bride. In the absence of proof, it cannot, of course, be stated with absolute certainty that a special licence was not obtained for the poet's marriage; but that such a possibility is very remote is attested by the rare occurrence of examples of this dispensation in the Worcester registers, as well as by the rank of the persons to whom the special privileges were granted.⁴

The 102nd Canon of 1603 states that a marriage under the authority of a licence shall be celebrated "in the parish church or chapel where one of them dwelleth and in no other place," and even in this case the bishop may have required the applicant to make the selection before the issue of the licence. The first indication of any departure from this rule at the Worcester Registry appears in a letter, dated October 14th, 1611,

¹ See Appendix, No. XXI, for notes on Richard Hathaway the dramatist.

² *Vicar-General's Book*, No. 4, folio 301b; Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House.

³ This church would be named in the licence.

⁴ See p. 10.

addressed to the registrar, who is asked to direct a licence to be issued for a marriage "by the parson of Wytley Shrawley or Astley that if one of them be owte of the way or nott able the other may perform the ceremony."¹ There is no record of the issue of the licence, and I cannot ascertain whether the request was granted. In the Worcester records the first evidence of the practice mentioned by Mr. Coote is found in the allegations which commence in 1660-1. In the first two, which are dated February 6th, the marriage is to be solemnized at the Cathedral by "John Sawyer, Clerke," and in the third, bearing the same date, the choice of either Ipsley or Studley is allowed. In a licence dated February 8th, the parties are allowed to make a selection from Bromsgrove, Upton Warren, or Tardebigg.² In the Hereford bonds of 1660 it is a frequent condition that "the said marriage be publicly solemnized in the parish church or chapel where either of the parties dwelleth." The practice of marrying in a parish which was not the residence of either of the parties became common after the Restoration. In the parish register of Saint Michael in Bedwardine, Worcester, the average number of marriages per annum increased from three between 1621 and 1639 to fifteen between 1666 and 1673,³ a change which cannot be attributed to an increase in the population of the city or of that particular parish. The residences fortunately are entered in the register, and the increase is satisfactorily accounted for by the fact that in the majority of cases both of the parties were residents in other parishes. In nearly every case a licence had been obtained, and on comparing the dates of the allegations with the entries in the parish register I found that in some years 80 per cent. of the marriages were solemnized on the day the licences were issued. These figures indicate that it had become a common practice for non-parishioners, mostly from country parishes, to marry by licence in one of the city churches, the

¹ Bundle of Marriage Bonds and other documents. Worcester Diocesan Registry.

² *Allegation Book*, No. 1, Worcester Diocesan Registry.

³ These figures are taken from the transcripts, from which, in some years, the marriages are missing.

proximity of Saint Michael's to the Bishop's Registry¹ together with facilities for despatch probably making that church a favourite resort for the purpose.² The possibility that Shakespeare was married "in a little church connected with the cathedral"³ has been suggested; but this reference to Saint Michael's receives no support from the well-kept register of that parish. If secrecy was the principal reason for obtaining Shakespeare's licence, some place remote from Stratford may have been selected, and possibly one of the Worcester churches was named in the allegation as the place of marriage; but the incompleteness of some of the city parochial registers makes it impossible to say whether this course was or was not adopted.

Mr. Richard Savage, of Stratford-upon-Avon, has found in the register of the parish of Saint Martin, Worcester, entries of the names of Combe, Nash, Hall, Shirley, and other well-known Stratford families and possible connections or acquaintances of the Shakespeares, and from this he considers it not improbable that the poet was married in St. Martin's church.⁴

The Stratford parish register⁵ contains no record of Shakespeare's marriage, and it is therefore improbable that the ceremony took place there. The marriage entries up to September 15th, 1600, are transcripts of the old paper register, so that it is not known whether that was well kept or not; but the only source of error lies in the possibility of an omission from the original or from the entries copied into the present volume, the correctness of which, however, is certified by the vicar and churchwardens. Luddington, one of the Stratford chapelries, has also been mentioned as the place of marriage; but I have met with no reliable information on the subject, the parish registers having been lost, and there being no earlier transcript than 1617. Fullom says the tradition can

¹ The old church of St. Michael stood at the west end of the cathedral.

² The marriage by licence of this large number of non-residents may, perhaps, have been due less to a desire for privacy than an intention to take advantage of opportunities for merry-making not afforded by the native village.

³ H. S. and O. W. Ward, *Shakespeare's Town and Times*, p. 104.

⁴ A curious circumstance connected with the parish register is related in the Appendix, No. XXII.

⁵ The Stratford-upon-Avon parish register commences in 1558.

be traced back directly for a hundred and fifty years, and repeats local gossip in support of the statement that the register of marriages had been seen within living memory.¹ Other writers notice the tradition,² which does not appear to have been current at the date of Malone's inquiries; and Halliwell-Phillipps refers to it as only "publicly noticed in quite recent years. . . . Jordan, in a separate account of Luddington, makes no allusion to its marriage tradition; nor had the late R. B. Wheler, up to the year 1821 or later, ever heard of such a belief."³ The claims of Temple Grafton rest somewhat insecurely upon the entry in the bishop's register and the chance that the name was copied in error from the allegation, in which it may have been mentioned as the place of marriage. The question cannot be definitely settled in the absence of that document and of the parish register for 1582.⁴ Billesley church, with registers commencing in 1812, is referred to by Malone as the possible place of the marriage, but on insufficient grounds.⁵ It has also been thought that the ceremony may have been performed at Hampton Lucy,⁶ but this supposition is not confirmed by the parish registers, which commence in 1556. The probability that Shakespeare was married in any one of the churches referred to depends largely upon the reasons for avoiding the full publication of banns, and these, in the absence of definite information, can only be inferred from the circumstances discussed in the notes on the necessity for the licence.

¹ *History of William Shakespeare*, p. 202.

² R. G. White, *Memoirs of the Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 55; J. C. M. Bellow, *Shakespeare's Home at New Place*, p. 133; H. S. and C. W. Ward, *Shakespeare's Town and Times*, p. 104.

³ *Outlines*, ii. 364, note 299. See also Appendix, No. XXIII.

⁴ The Temple Grafton parish registers commence in 1695, and the transcripts in the Diocesan Registry in 1612.

⁵ *The Life of William Shakespeare* 1821, p. 111.

⁶ G. R. French, *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, p. 373; Isaac Reed, *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, 1803, i. 139, note 4.

V

JOHN SHAKESPEARE'S CONSENT

THE opinion that William Shakespeare married without his father's consent is founded mainly upon certain features of the licence bond, supposed to be unusual in others of that period, viz. that neither of the sureties was a member of the Shakespeare family, that consent was limited to the friends of the bride, and that there should be one publication of banns. The insertion of the words "hir frindes" has also been regarded as an error,¹ while some writers accept this proviso as correctly conveying all that was intended, and hold that it points to the controlling influence of the Hathaway family in the marriage preliminaries. Dr. Sidney Lee says "the wording of the bond which was drawn before Shakespeare's marriage differs in important respects from that adopted in all other known examples. In the latter it is invariably provided that the marriage shall not take place without the consent of the parents or governors of both bride and bridegroom. . . . The wedding probably took place, without the consent of the bridegroom's parents—it may be without their knowledge—soon after the signing of the deed."² There is, however, no distinction between the Shakespeare bond and others of the same period in the limitation of consent to the friends of Anne Hathaway, such differences as exist being confined to variations in the wording of the clause (according as the bride happened to be under the control of parents, guardians, or friends) and, occasionally, to its entire omission when she was a widow or, in

¹ G. R. French, *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, p. 559.

² *A Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 21-2.

the words of the London bonds, "wholly at her own government." No special condition providing for consent in the case of either of the parties was inserted in the Worcester bonds before January 1581-2, when a clause referring solely to the "consent and agreement of the parents or governors" of the bride was introduced;¹ and it was not until January 1588-9 that the bridegroom was included.²

The necessity for the consent of the parents of all persons licensed to marry without the full publication of banns had been considered before the introduction of the first clause in the Worcester bonds. In one of the Articles delivered to the Lords from the Lower House of Convocation in 1580, it was proposed "That there be no dispensation granted for marriage without banns but under sufficient and large bonds. . . . And thirdly that they proceed not to the solemnization of the marriage without consent of parents and governors."³

These articles were not at that time sanctioned by the queen, and were again brought forward by Archbishop Whitgift, who appears to have been mainly instrumental in gaining for them the force of law, immediately after his translation from Worcester to Canterbury. "For in the month of September [1583] divers good articles were drawn up by himself and the rest of the bishops of his province and signed by them. Which the Queen also allowed of and gave her Royal Assent unto to give them greater authority." After the article as to consent, which was a repetition of that of 1580,⁴ the following words were added: "The copy of which bond is to be set down and given in charge to every bishop in his diocese to follow."⁵

The condition in which reference is made to the consent of

¹ Bonds for marriage licences in bundle of wills for the year 1581, Worcester Probate Registry. A Durham bond, dated February 22nd, 1583, contains no reference to consent. In the bonds for 1587 at Durham and for 1588 at Lincoln the consent of the parents of both parties is inserted.

² Bonds filed with wills for the year 1588.

³ Strype, *Life of Grindal*, pp. 587-8. Blackstone's *Commentaries*, 1836 ed., i. 436.

⁴ Gibson says the restraints moved for in 1580 were framed into an Article or Constitution and passed in 1584. *Codes*, 1713, i. 515.

⁵ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 227.

the bride's friends therefore appeared in the Worcester bonds before the Article making the insertion compulsory had received royal sanction; and this appears to indicate that Whitgift, who had the power to impose upon the sureties such conditions as were not contrary to civil or canon law, was ready to initiate, in his own diocese, any change likely to prevent the abuse of the licence,¹ and to take advantage of every safeguard afforded either by the bond, the oath of the applicant, the certificate of consent, or the letter of recommendation,² in order to protect himself and his officials against any attempt to conceal the facts.

The delay in making the full change at Worcester until 1588-9 can be explained only as a result of the tardy adoption of the copy of the bond by the officials, and to some relaxation of discipline and personal control after Whitgift had left the diocese. Before the first of these changes was made, obedience to the then existing law was no doubt deemed to have been secured by the original condition of the bond that the parties could "by the laws and statutes of this realm be lawfully married together," a clause which, concurrently with the introduction of the special reference to consent in February 1581-2, was replaced by the words "or by any other means whatsoever" following the enumeration of certain impediments. Either of these clauses was sufficiently comprehensive to make the sureties responsible in the matter of consent in the case of a minor;³ and it was no departure from the usual practice at the Worcester Registry in 1582 to exclude the bridegroom of eighteen from a condition which it was considered necessary to apply to a bride who was of full age, and who could, therefore, have been legally married by banns without the consent of parents or friends. In any case, it may be taken for granted that the assurance

¹ Public opinion was becoming strongly averse to the issue of marriage licences, unless such matters as consent were more effectually safeguarded.

² See Appendix, No. XXIV.

³ There is nothing in the bonds to distinguish the bridegroom who was a minor. In 116 of the bonds for the years 1582 and 1583 the bridegroom, either alone or with others, is a surety; so that the minors are included in the remaining 50 with those who did not make personal application or, from various causes, were not acceptable as sureties.

of consent was regarded as one of the most important of the precautions then taken against carelessness, collusion, or fraud on the part of any one concerned in a marriage by licence. I have not seen a marriage licence of the date of the Shakespeare grant, but have no doubt that the consent of the parents or guardians of both parties was then inserted. In 1584, Archbishop Whitgift and the bishops, in answer to one of the articles¹ offered in the previous session of Parliament (27 Eliz.), stated that "The inconvenience that is proposed is in most dioceses already met withal by putting the conditions in the faculty (licence); viz. that they have their governor's consent;"² and in the example of a licence given in the Canons of 1597 allusion is made to "the express consent of your parents and governors on both sides" and "the express consent of your parents and guardians."³

No exception was made in Shakespeare's case in requiring one publication of banns; and, as this condition was almost invariably inserted in the bonds of the period at Worcester, it can no longer be regarded "as a proof that John Shakspeare had not, up to that time, given consent to his son's marriage."⁴

The theory that the marriage took place without John Shakespeare's consent involves the assumption that the sureties and others concerned in the application joined in a conspiracy to obtain the licence by fraud, and represented that William Shakespeare was of full age or that the requisite consent had been obtained. That the registry officials were deceived by a misstatement as to his age or by means of a forged certificate of his father's consent is exceedingly improbable.

However lightly the poet and his bride might have regarded such a method of attaining their object,⁵ the sureties could hardly have been blind to the consequences, and the interest

¹ See also Appendix, No. XII.

² Wilkins, *Concilia*, iv. 814.

³ Cardwell, *Synodalia*, i. 161.

⁴ H. C. Coote, quoted by G. B. French, *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, p. 559.

⁵ The penalty for their part in such a transaction would probably have been no more severe than a fine or penance, but with a dispensation to remain in a state of matrimony.

of Sandells and Richardson in the affairs of the bride or her family would have been great indeed to induce them to undertake such a responsibility. Moreover, if John Shakespeare had intended to prevent the marriage, an appeal to the Consistory Court would have defeated any attempt to deprive him of his right to forbid the banns, unless the whole of the arrangements could have been carried out absolutely without his knowledge. His legal experiences had, no doubt, made him acquainted with his right, upon entering a caveat,¹ to be heard before the issue of a licence, and it is difficult to believe that he could have been kept in entire ignorance of his son's intentions.

Neither the form in which consent was given in the poet's case nor the person by whom it was certified is known,² but it is almost certain, in view of the reasons already stated, that the licence could not have been obtained without it, unless John Shakespeare was mentally incapacitated,³ a conclusion to which the believers in the non-consent hypothesis will hardly be prepared to subscribe.

The consent of parents and guardians of both parties, whether minors or of full age, forms an important part of the London allegations, and sworn statements of the persons consenting are frequently met with. A strict application of the rule appears in an allegation, dated May 21st, 1598, for a licence granted to Edward Walker of St. Marie-at-Hill, Clothworker and freeman of London, of the age of 26 years, the son of Edward Walker, late of Dewsberie, Yorkshire, deceased.⁴

That his mother "was consenting to the intended marriage Mr. Edward Whitaker parson and preacher of Thornhill in Yorkshire is redy to testifie." At the foot of the allegation is the following: "Mr. Whittaker is to send up a note under Edward Walker's mother's hand in Trinity Term 1598. As

¹ The register of caveats for the year 1582 is not among the Worcester records. In 1597 the fee for entering a caveat was 2s. 8d.

² The earliest certificate of consent I have found at the Worcester Registry is dated April 16th, 1601. For a copy of this document, see Appendix, No. XXIV.

³ Blackstone's *Commentaries*, 1828, i. 436-7.

⁴ *Allegation Book* No. 1, London Diocesan Registry.

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by his hand to a note pynned to the bond appeareth." And in the margin "Received the note under Elizabeth Walker's hand the mother of the said Edward Walker 26 June 1598."¹

It cannot be stated with certainty that the practice at the London Registry in 1597 was identical with that at Worcester fifteen years earlier; but the carefully worded clauses as to consent in the London allegations are strictly in accordance with the rule mentioned in the answer to the articles of 1583. The more precise directions issued by Convocation in 1597 relate mainly to the means by which the assurance of consent was to be obtained. Whitgift's general policy and the reference to the consent of Anne Hathaway's friends in the bond indicate that the rule above referred to was enforced at Worcester in 1582, especially with regard to minors, and that John Shakespeare's consent, if he was mentally capable, was required before the issue of the licence. It is of course assumed, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that William Shakespeare was properly described by the applicant as being in his minority and that the registry officials were not parties to a fraud.

Halliwell-Phillipps inferred from the supposed impression of the letters "R.H." upon the seal, and the fact that two of Richard Hathaway's friends were sureties "that the marriage was arranged under the special auspices of the Hathaway family, and that the engagement was not received with favour in Henley Street."² Dr. Sidney Lee says that "Sandells and Richardson, representing the lady's family, doubtless secured the deed on their own initiative; so that Shakespeare might have small opportunity of evading a step which his intimacy with their friend's daughter had rendered essential to her reputation."³ Although the inferences usually deduced in Shakespeare's case may appear to be justified by such considerations as the supposed necessity for an early marriage,

¹ Neither the bond nor the note is known to be in existence.

² *Outlines*, i. 63.

³ *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 22. See also Karl Elze, *William Shakespeare*, p. 78, and E. Dowden, *Irving and Marshall Shakespeare*, viii. xvii.

they receive no support from any reading of the bond which is not influenced by the adverse construction placed upon the few known facts of his early married life.

It is probably true that the sureties were Richard Hathaway's neighbours at Shottery, and that they were the persons named in his will;¹ but neither these circumstances nor any evidence derived from the bond justifies the inference that the responsibility was accepted solely in the interests of the bride, or that the sureties were acting without the approval, if not at the request, of the poet's friends. And further, as we are not entitled to assume that Sandells and Richardson were quite indifferent to the consequences of an irregularity in the marriage, it is not probable that they signed the bond without first taking the precaution of ascertaining that John Shakespeare had given the assurance of his consent which was necessary to their safety.

The absence of John Shakespeare's name from the bond is open to other explanations than that of a refusal to consent to the marriage. It has been suggested that, in common with other suspected recusants, he may have conveyed his property to avoid forfeiture.²

This is possible, and such a precaution, in itself a very good reason for declining to join in the bond, would have been defeated by a proposal to become bound for the then large sum of £40, since any charge of recusancy made against John Shakespeare must have been known at the Bishop's Registry. This knowledge would also have been to his disadvantage as a proposed surety. In obedience to Archbishop Grindal's article of inquiry of June 21st, 1580,³ Whitgift in 1581 "was busied about the examination of such as were papists: Of which sort there were many families in Worcester and the rest of his diocese. Of their names he had sent up certificates before."⁴

¹ *Outlines*, ii. 183-4. See also a copy of Richard Hathaway's will in Appendix, No. XV.

² T. Carter, *Shakespeare, Puritan and Recusant*, pp. 32, 32-3. H. S. Bowden, *The Religion of Shakespeare*, p. 71.

³ Strype, *Life of Grindal*, p. 379.

⁴ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 189.

In 1582 he was required by the Lords of the Council "to cause in every parish within his diocese, a diligent enquiry and search to be made, of all such persons as sith the end of the last sessions of Parliament, had forborne to come to church, and having thereof been lawfully convicted, nevertheless not conformed themselves."¹ The financial risk could hardly have been John Shakespeare's sole reason for refusing to join in the bond, the absence of impediments and consequent exemption from liability to loss being indicated by the fact that Sandells and Richardson undertook that responsibility.

Another possible explanation is that John Shakespeare hesitated to render himself liable to penalties by openly assisting him in a breach of covenants by marrying during a term of apprenticeship. And in view of the manner of the poet's departure from Stratford, as related to Dowdall by the parish clerk, the possibility that he might have to deal with an already aggrieved master was not remote. According to a modern reading of the Apprentices' Act (5 Eliz. c. 4), the covenant against matrimony included in the indentures of the period would have been of no effect against William Shakespeare; but the clause was generally inserted,² and perhaps, even then, with the intention of obtaining the remedy "by action against the father or other surety."³

If the absence of John Shakespeare's name from the bond was not due to some regulation which rendered his services unnecessary, it probably had some connection with his own difficulties, which appear to have been approaching a crisis at the date of his son's marriage. Their origin or extent can be only surmised, but it is almost certain that within a few

¹ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 196. A list presented by the Commissioners in 1592 contains the name of John Shakespeare. See Appendix, No. XXV. See also *Outlines*, ii. 397-8.

² In an indenture, dated 4 James I., between the Churchwardens and Overseers of Stratford-upon-Avon and John Loxley *alias* Coox of the same place, glover, the covenant reads, "Matrimony with any maid or woman he shall not commit." *Stratford Corporation Records*.

³ *The Law relating to Apprentices*, Evans Austin, p. 58. As regards the authenticity of Dowdall's account of the apprenticeship, see Appendix, No. XXX.

years after he had been called upon to fill the highest municipal office at Stratford-upon-Avon the prosperity which marked his early career had commenced to wane. In 1578 some indication of financial or other trouble appears in the mortgage of the small estate of Asbies,¹ which was afterwards completely alienated, although great efforts were made to retain it in the family.²

In 1586, after continued irregular attendance at the council meetings, he was deprived of his position as alderman,³ and the production of a writ of *habeas corpus*, "which shows that he had been in custody or prison, probably for debt,"⁴ is supposed to have been followed by a temporary retirement from the town.⁵

How John Shakespeare's reverses influenced the part he played in the marriage preliminaries and why he failed to render his son a service for which he was, apparently, above all others, well qualified are questions which in the present state of our information cannot be satisfactorily answered. There appears, however, to be no valid reason for supposing that consent was refused, and it is open to speculate whether the father regarded the proposed marriage with sufficient favour to induce him to join his son in applying for the licence,—whether, finding opposition to be of no avail, he at last allowed the necessary assurance to be given, or whether mental trouble, caused by the weight of his misfortunes, at times rendered him so far indifferent to the interests of his family that he allowed the boy to follow his own inclination without interference even in such an important matter as marriage.⁶

¹ It should, however, be noted that at least some part of his real property—that situated in Henley Street—remained in his possession, and was inherited by the poet.

² *Outlines*, i. 151.

³ *Stratford Council Book A*. John Shakespeare attended only one meeting in 1582, when he voted on the election of John Sadler as High Bailiff.

⁴ See F. J. Furnivall, Introduction to *The Royal Shakespeares*, i. ix.

⁵ Karl Elze, *William Shakespeare*, p. 92; and Charles Knight, *William Shakespeare, a Biography*, 1865, p. 108.

⁶ For other opinions on this subject, see F. J. Furnivall, *The Royal Shakespeares*, i. vii. § 8; Nathan Drake, *Shakespeare and His Times*, i. 62.

As John Shakespeare's consent does not appear to have been withheld, it may seem strange that a surety was not procured among his numerous relatives and friends.¹ The absence of any of the well-known names is taken to indicate that all these were averse to the marriage, a natural conclusion if it were known that the poet was on good terms with them. But if the traditional and not improbable view of his youth is to be relied upon, it is not unlikely that, amongst other causes, an inclination for the stage had given offence to some of his relations, and that an occasional public appearance² had supplied those who might otherwise have given the required aid with a reason for declining to take any responsibility on behalf of one who showed a preference for a calling then held in disrepute.

The terms of the bond itself throw very little light upon this question. An analysis of the 166 bonds executed during the years 1582 and 1583 reveals the fact that a surety of the same name as the bridegroom is found in only 24; and as every namesake in this very limited number may not have been the father, the services of the paternal relative could have been available or acceptable for only a very small proportion of the licences granted. This result is curious, and the meaning of it is not clear, for, if the fathers were consenting and acceptable as sureties, there appears to be no reason why their number should be so small. It may be, however, that the bishop made it a rule that the bride's friends should join in the bond as an additional safeguard for her protection.

Whatever may be the true explanation of the facts cited, it can no longer be maintained that the absence of John Shakespeare's name from the bond is at all remarkable, and the inferences usually drawn from this aspect of the marriage therefore lose their significance.

¹ The names of Quiney, Sadler, Reynolds, Greene, and others are well known as those of friends of the family.

² George Brandes, *William Shakespeare, A Critical Study*, p. 11; F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*, p. 107; H. G. Bohn, *The Biography and Bibliography of Shakespeare*, p. 76.

VI

THE NECESSITY FOR A LICENCE

HASTE and secrecy are the reasons usually assigned for the necessity of the licence obtained for the marriage of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway.¹ The first was probably the more urgent, and is the only one indicated by the bond, from which we learn that two of the publications of banns were dispensed with. Secrecy may also have been desired; but of this there is no evidence, since the place of marriage is not named in the bond or in the entry in the bishop's register.

The defective condition of the earlier parish registers and the omission of the place of abode from many of the records of the grants make it impossible to trace all the marriages by licence; but I have ascertained, by means of a search in parishes named in the bishop's registers,² that more than half of a certain number of marriages for which licences were granted in the years 1581 and 1582 were solemnized in the bride's parish.³ And, as it is known that, in some cases, the ceremony was performed in the bridegroom's parish or in a parish adjoining the residence of one of the parties, it is evident that some other motive than secrecy prompted the application for the greater part of the licences granted in Shakespeare's day.

¹ Karl Elze, *William Shakespeare*, p. 78; Charles Knight, *William Shakespeare, A Biography*, p. 272; Thomas De Quincey, *Shakespeare, A Biography*, p. 51.

² See notes on the Terminal Parish: Appendix, No. XVII.

³ In the records of licences granted before 1578 in which the place of marriage is given, the bride's parish is generally named,—probably as often as in the cases of marriage after banns. See Appendix, No. XX.

Among the illicit motives for a secret marriage are those arising out of precontract, consanguinity, affinity, or want of consent,¹ only the last of which is likely to have existed in Shakespeare's case. The absence of this or any such disability as may have been included in the "any other meanes whatsoever" of the bond is, however, clearly indicated by the facts that the poet and his affairs must have been well known to the sureties and that their friendly service was rendered at a time when, in the diocese of Worcester at any rate, irregularities of the kind mentioned would almost certainly have resulted in the forfeiture of the penalty. In order to establish the contention that such an impediment as the absence of consent existed, and was concealed by the applicant for the licence, it is not enough merely to assert that the system under which licences were granted was, at times, greatly abused, and that there are circumstances in connection with Shakespeare's marriage which require explanation. No other evidence, however, has been adduced, and it is only by a perversion of the meaning of the terms of the bond that any appearance of objection on the part of the friends on either side can be read into it. In Anne Hathaway's case the clause referring to the consent of her friends places the matter beyond doubt, and all the available evidence points to the conclusion that the obstacles to marriage by licence without the consent of the poet's friends were so great as to make the attainment of illegal secrecy well-nigh impossible under the circumstances as we know them. If, for this or any other reason, Shakespeare had found a clandestine marriage necessary and if a lax discipline in the diocese had afforded the opportunity, the publicity of banns would have been more easily and economically evaded in a manner such as that described in a complaint to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1598: "others never stayed asking the banns three several festival days, as is by law required; but did ask them twice upon some holy-day, and the third time the next morning, when they were married."² In the absence of John

¹ The second and third of these appear to have been the cause of grave scandal in the church in Elizabethan times.

² Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, ii. 400.

Shakespeare's determined opposition, the existence of which remains to be proved, there appear to have been only justifiable reasons for avoiding the full publication of banns. Such reasons, to some extent involving secrecy,¹ are not wanting, and amongst them is the possibility that Shakespeare may have had occasion to conceal his presence in Stratford or its vicinity from some enemy of whom he stood in fear. If the poaching episode could be established¹ and assigned to the pre-marriage period, the supposed result would supply an adequate motive for selecting some place for the wedding at a safe distance from Charlecote, and the difficulty of arranging for the ceremony under such conditions would sufficiently account for the licence. Aubrey's account suggests the possibility that this occurred about the time of the marriage, and made it undesirable that the banns should be publicly proclaimed in the church at Stratford.

At that period the powers of a master to compel the return of an apprentice who had illegally left his employment were far-reaching, and, with such a charge to answer, Shakespeare's position would have been one of considerable danger² unless, indeed, his nimble wit and impatience of restraint had given the master very good reasons for viewing his departure with satisfaction.³ But this is altogether conjectural, since it is not known, with any certainty, whether the offence of running away had been condoned, leaving the youth free from his indentures when he applied for the licence.⁴ That it was obtained to avoid arrest on this account, unless the fact of his apprenticeship was concealed from the registry officials, is, however, improbable, if the London regulations were in force at Worcester in 1582. On February 17th, 1597-8, an allegation was partly prepared for the issue of a marriage licence to

¹ See Mrs. C. C. Stopes on "Justice Shallow," *Fortnightly Review*, February 1908.

² 5 Eliz. c. 4, s. 47. These references to Shakespeare's "master" should be read with my comments on Dowdall's letter. See Appendix, No. XXX.

³ The satisfaction on parting may have been mutual, for apprenticeship seems to have been a hard service in those days.

⁴ The parish clerk's use of the word "master" is not consistent with the supposition that Shakespeare was apprenticed to his father.

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"William Gardner aged about 25 yeres, being a Bachelor, of the parishe of Islington . . . Yeoman, having nether father nor mother living and serveth S^r John Spencer at Islington and hath his land in his owne hands &c."¹ The allegation is unfinished and without signature or jurat, and in the margin is written "He confeseth he hath not his master's consent and therefor is refused." From the result of this application it would appear that a master's consent was considered to be necessary, and that a licence was sometimes refused for reasons which would not have been accepted in objection to a marriage after banns. Although such a ruling is not in agreement with the modern interpretation of the Apprentices' Act,² Shakespeare's application might have been refused on similar grounds.

The sensitiveness which causes some to shrink from the publicity of a proclamation of the banns and of a marriage ceremony before neighbours and friends has been regarded as an adequate reason for the licence. But since the Shakespeares and the Hathaways, as the absence of their names suggests, were but little interested in the arrangements or else were powerless to render the necessary assistance as sureties, the difficulties connected with the bond were too great to be lightly encountered by one in the poet's position, had he no more substantial reason than a desire for a wedding without the full publication of banns or in the seclusion of a remote parish.³

Cases of injustice arising from the want of consent were referred to the Consistory Court, and the mental incapacity of a father or unjust refusal by guardians constituted sufficient grounds for interference, the decision of the Judge being followed by the issue of a licence; but there is no evidence

¹ *Allegation Book* No. 1, London Diocesan Registry.

² "A covenant against matrimony in an indenture of apprenticeship is of no effect, a covenant in restraint of marriage being illegal." Evans Austin, *The Law relating to Apprentices*, p. 58.

³ The absence of the record of the marriage from the Stratford parish register does not prove that secrecy was desired, for the ceremony might have been performed at Luddington or Bishopton, both chapels in the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon.

that the grant in Shakespeare's case was made under such circumstances.

Halliwell-Phillipps considered it not unlikely that John Shakespeare still clung to the old faith, that the marriage had been solemnized according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, and that in November 1582 "the relatives were now anxious for the marriage to be openly acknowledged."¹ A somewhat similar reason is advanced by the Rev. H. Sebastian Bowden, who thinks that the licence may have been obtained "both to screen his secret espousals and to obtain a legal certificate of his union."²

Although a clandestine ceremony may, in Shakespeare's case, have been celebrated by a Roman Catholic priest, this alone would not explain why a licence was necessary in November 1582. No licence to marry, whether special or common, would legalize a marriage which had already been performed, neither would it protect the parties to a marriage without banns from the consequences of their illegal action.³ Such a licence as that granted to Francis Throgmorton, to marry in some oratory or chapel not specified, may possibly have been used to screen a secret marriage, but it is very unlikely that Shakespeare's licence was of that kind or that he had sufficient influence to obtain one.⁴

It has been suggested that Shakespeare's marriage licence may have been used for the purpose of depriving the youthful lover of the opportunity of evading his responsibilities. This theory appears to rest upon such considerations as disparity in age, the supposed estrangement, and certain passages in his writings, none of which justifies the inference, for, whatever he might have thought of his matrimonial venture in after-years, they give no clue to his opinions or intentions in November 1582. Without this information and some knowledge

¹ *Outlines*, i. 63.

² *The Religion of Shakespeare*, p. 92. See also Mrs. C. C. Stopes, *Shakespeare's Family*, p. 64.

³ In former times such offences were sometimes remitted by a special absolution to all the parties.

⁴ See p. 10.

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of his circumstances at that date it is, of course, impossible to say whether or not Anne's friends had any cause for anxiety on her account; but it is quite certain that the possession of a licence would have been of no value to them, except, perhaps, to deprive the supposed laggard of an excuse for delay on such a pretext as the difficulty of arranging for an immediate performance of the ceremony. Moreover, the licence could not have been obtained on the application of the bride or her friends without proof of Shakespeare's approval and his father's consent, which would probably have been withheld if coercion had been the object.¹ The existence of such an embarrassing position as that which has been invented for Shakespeare in assuming that he was reluctant to proceed with the marriage is inconsistent with the fact that Anne Hathaway became his wife in spite of some obstacle which, by joining in the application for the licence, he and his father assisted to remove.

The result of the poet's intimacy with Anne Hathaway has been commonly accepted as a sufficient reason for a hasty and a private marriage, and therefore for the licence.² When the marriage was found to be necessary within a certain time, the Shakespeare and Hathaway families were no doubt anxious to avoid the possibility of a grievous wrong to mother and child; but without some other good reason, such as the prospect of indefinite delay, the necessity for haste so long before Susanna's birth does not appear to have been urgent.³

A secret marriage six months before that event would not have averted whatever neighbourly comment was, at that period, considered appropriate upon such occasions;⁴ nor would the saving of the short time required for the publication

¹ If there had been good grounds for such a proceeding, a suit in the Consistory Court for a completion of the marriage contract would have been more to the purpose. See Appendix, No. IV.

² See O. J. Ribton Turner, *Shakespeare's Land*, p. 185.

³ As the date of Susanna's baptism, May 26th, 1583, may be taken as an approximation to the date of her birth, no great need for haste can fairly be assumed.

⁴ Probably nothing more hurtful than a homely jest.

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of banns have been of any service as a means of preventing scandal, if Anne's good name had been at stake.

The Worcester marriage documents of Shakespeare's day now extant give no information as to the grounds of application for licences;¹ but the London allegations show that permission to marry without the full publication of banns and in a parish other than that in which either of the parties usually resided was sometimes granted for very trivial reasons. On December 27th, 1598, a licence was granted by the Bishop of London to "Robert Bruffe, Virginall maker, a Widdower of the parishe of St. Martin's Ludgate aged abowte three scoare years" and "one Margarette Potter his mayden servant of the parishe aforesaid aged about thirty yeares . . . they desier licence to be married at Brainforde aforesayd where all her freindes that she hath alive do dwell. As also for that the owlde man² is now there and hath already made provision there for the solemnization of the sayd marriage."

On January 26th, 1598-9, a licence was issued to William Pratt and Jhone Hardinge, both of St. Albans, to be married at "S^t Bennett Powles Wharfe London, for that their frends are come up to London for the same purpose."³

On July 18th, 1604, Henry Beadell of St. Martin's in the Vintry applied for a licence for John Cordwell of Chinckford Widower and Edith Bridgman of the same parish Widow, and certified as to the "consente of the fores^d Edith as also the consent of the said John Cordwell. . . . Wherefore he desireth for them to be married in the parishe church of S^t Martin's in the Vintry for that he this deponent is her naturall brother is to give them their dynner."⁴

Although it has been considered that marriage licences were granted mainly to persons of superior station, it is proved by these and other examples in the London registers that at the end of the sixteenth century the use of the licence was

¹ General reasons for licences to marry are given in the Appendix, No. XXVI.

² The "owide man" was the bridegroom.

³ *Allegation Book No. 1*, London Diocesan Registry.

⁴ *Allegation Book No. 2*, London Diocesan Registry.

common in the class to which Shakespeare and his bride belonged. The Worcester bonds also demonstrate that, from 1580 to 1600, yeomen, farmers, traders, and craftsmen largely availed themselves of the privilege, while few of the applicants claimed a higher social position.¹ The difficulty of providing sureties and of obtaining a letter of recommendation, rather than the cost of the licence, may therefore be regarded as a measure of the urgency of the conditions which, in Shakespeare's case, made the full publication of banns undesirable.

Apart from the reasons hitherto mentioned, it appears to be probable that, although secrecy may have occasionally entered into the motive,² the necessity for most of the licences of Shakespeare's day was due to haste; and this theory is supported by a comparison of the dates of the Worcester grants with the dates of marriage, which proves that, generally, there was very little delay after the licence was obtained. In a few of the cases which I have traced to the parish registers the marriage pre-dates the licence, some of which unexpected discrepancies may possibly be due to error in the date of the grant or the record of the marriage. Many of the marriage entries bear the same date as the licence, and there are numerous instances in which but one or two days were allowed to elapse, a small minority only making a more leisurely use of the privilege at longer intervals. In addition to the causes previously described, such as urgency and seclusion, the number of licences in Shakespeare's time was, no doubt, considerably augmented by that rule of the church which prohibited marriage, *after banns*, at certain periods of the year, when, however, the ceremony could be performed under the authority of a licence.

The Worcester records afford no information from which it

¹ Out of a total of one hundred and sixty-six only fourteen are described as "gentlemen." See Appendix, No. XXVII.

² It may be reasonably assumed that some licences were required for the innocent purpose of securing such semi-privacy as could be obtained by avoiding the full publication of banns, which, unless holy days intervened, made the marriage known at least a fortnight before the ceremony.

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is possible to estimate to what extent the applications for licences were thus increased, but the number granted immediately before and during the prohibited seasons was above the average. The rule was, no doubt, strictly applied in the diocese of Worcester in Whitgift's time, for in 1584, when Archbishop of Canterbury, he complained to the Queen that the House of Commons "have also passed a bill giving liberty to marry at all times of the year without restraint, contrary to the old Canons continually observed among us, and containing matter which tendeth to the slaunder of this church as having hitherto maintained an error."¹ I have not seen any statement of these seasons at the date of Shakespeare's licence. Late in the fifteenth century, Lyndwood² defined them as from the first Sunday in Advent up to the Octave of Epiphany exclusive; from Septuagesima up to the first Sunday after Easter inclusive; and from the first day of Rogation up to the seventh day of Pentecost inclusive. On the same authority contracts of marriage might be made during the prohibited times. In the table of fees set forth by Archbishop Whitgift in 1597 occurs the item "*Licentia solemnizandi matrimonium tempore prohibito bannis editis*," and these fees are confirmed by Canon 130 of 1603, though the prohibited times are not mentioned. They are referred to by Dr. Cosin in some "observations, contained on several leaves, . . . bound up at the end of the interleaved Book of Common Prayer of 1619," and probably written during the reign of King Charles I.³ "And here be it noted that by the ecclesiastical laws of this realm there be some times of the year wherein marriages are not usually solemnized as :

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Advent | } Sunday until { | 8 days after the Epiphany |
| From Septuagesima | | 8 days after Easter |
| Rogation | | Trinity Sunday." |

¹ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 391.

² *Constitutiones Provinciales*, 1679, p. 274. (Printed for the first time 1470-80.)

³ *The Works of John Cosin, Lord Bishop of Durham*, 1855, Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, v. 502, 523.

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In commenting upon the unseasonable times mentioned in the 62nd Canon of 1603, Gibson says: "That is of the day, not of the year, I find no prohibitions expressed or plainly supposed in our Constitutions or Canons."¹ There appears to be some doubt whether banns published at these seasons are legal;² but I have met with no instance of the application of such a rule.

In the register of cases in which persons were cited to appear before the Worcester Consistory Court, to answer for offences against the ecclesiastical laws, occurs a minute of the proceedings against Thomas Quiney and his wife for marrying without a licence. The entry contains no other particulars of the offence, and the date of the hearing is not given, but the citation to appear was served between the day of their marriage and the next date in the register, May 11th, 1616.³ There can be little doubt that the offenders were the poet's youngest daughter Judith and her husband, who were married at Stratford-upon-Avon on February 10th, 1615-6. As they were both of age,⁴ and not related within the forbidden degrees, the offence was in all probability an infraction of the rule as to the prohibited seasons, for the marriage took place between Septuagesima Sunday and the Octave of Easter. Many cases of a similar kind appear in the same register.

In an allegation for a marriage licence issued by the Bishop of London on December 7th, 1597, to John Wilkin-son alias Marten and Margaret Shadbote, both of Broxbourne, it is stated that they "have byn bothe for three several Sundays asked in Broxborn church and because it is now a time forbidden to marrie in without licence the sayd John Wilkinson alias Martin the elder⁵ humbly desyreth to have licence for the solemnization of the marriage."⁶ As the banns

¹ *Codez Anglicanus*, 1713, i. 518.

² *The Congregation in Church*, p. 81.

³ *Visitation Book*, 1613-7. Kington Deanery. Worcester Diocesan Registry. The date next before this entry is February 9th.

⁴ Quiney was 27 and Judith Shakespeare 31.

⁵ The father of the bridegroom applied for the licence, and testified that there was no impediment.

⁶ *Allegation Book* No. 1, London Diocesan Registry.

had been published in Broxbourne church and the parties were parishioners and licensed to marry there, nothing more than a desire for haste can be assigned.¹ It is highly probable that the prohibited season was in the case of William Shakespeare's marriage the obstacle which the licence was intended to remove; but the dates of the grants suggest an important difference between the two cases. The London application during Advent, which in 1597 commenced on November 27th, merely indicates delay in a marriage for which the banns had been duly asked; but between the date of Shakespeare's licence and the prohibited season there were still five days² on any one of which the ceremony could have been performed without a licence, had the banns been published.³ It is therefore improbable that the proclamation had been made. Delay after publication cannot be advanced as a reason for obtaining a licence on November 27th, for, even if William Shakespeare had previously been unwilling to proceed with the marriage, or his father had been opposed to it, these objections must necessarily have been obviated before the licence was granted. And if an early marriage after banns had been decided upon in November, it is but reasonable to infer that the period during which a licence was required would, under ordinary circumstances, have been provided against by a timely publication,⁴ so as to allow of the performance of the ceremony before Advent; for, however urgent the marriage may have become, it could not have been celebrated without licence until the Octave of Epiphany, January 13th.⁵ The issue of Shakespeare's licence on November 27th therefore

¹ For further notes on the prohibited seasons, see Appendix, No. XXVIII.

² Advent Sunday does not appear to have been included in the prohibition.

³ Since this chapter was written, a work by the late Mr. C. I. Elton has appeared which, calling attention to the prohibited seasons in reference to the Shakespeare-Hathaway and the Quiney-Shakespeare marriages, erroneously states that in 1582 November 28th was a Thursday and December 1st was Advent Sunday, also that in 1615-6 January 7th was Septuagesima Sunday. *William Shakespeare, His Family and Friends*, 1904, pp. 34 and 255.

⁴ The marriage could then be solemnized at any date within three months.

⁵ The next prohibited season commenced on Septuagesima Sunday, and ended on the Octave of Easter, thus leaving only fourteen days between December 2nd and April 7th upon which marriages after banns could have been celebrated.

suggests some emergency that made a delay of even two months undesirable and had arisen when it was too late for the banns to be published on the last three available days before Advent, viz. on Sundays November 18th and 25th, and Saint Andrew's day, November 30th.¹

So little is known of the circumstances under which the arrangements for the wedding were made that it is, of course, possible that the licence was obtained for a reason quite as trivial as any of those already cited. The application a few days before the prohibited season of Advent may, after all, be only a coincidence, for it is not quite certain that the ceremony took place immediately afterwards. But, if it be admitted that Shakespeare intended to proceed with the marriage, and that Aubrey's account of the departure for London is correct, or that the poaching or other troubles came to a crisis in 1582 with the prospect of an absence of uncertain duration, then more serious reasons for both haste and secrecy become apparent. None of these propositions is capable of proof, but it is very probable that conditions which became urgent late in the month of November 1582 made it imperative that Shakespeare should leave Stratford at an early date. If so, the marriage having been agreed upon, and permitting of no such protracted delay as would be imposed by the prohibited season, a licence to marry during Advent, and perhaps at a distant church, was found to be the only way out of the difficulty. In any case, the view that something discreditable to Shakespeare or his wife is implied by the application for the licence is not sustained by the documentary evidence or by a consideration of the known facts relating to their marriage.

¹ This would have allowed the marriage to take place on Saturday, December 1st, or Sunday, December 2nd.

VII

THE DEPARTURE FROM STRATFORD

A KNOWLEDGE of the circumstances which induced Shakespeare or his friends to apply for the marriage licence would throw a much-needed light upon an interesting period of his life, and probably help in deciding between the conflicting opinions as to the date of his departure from Stratford. The marriage licence documents do not, however, appear to have been hitherto used for this purpose. The only other reliable domestic memorials of this period, the records of the baptisms of his children, have been employed in support of the theory of a continuous residence in Stratford until the last of those events;¹ but they cannot, without further proof, be regarded as establishing it. Although the required information is not given in the licence records at Worcester, the general reasons for granting marriage licences, considered in the light of other evidence, give support to my proposition that the licence was obtained to allow the marriage to take place under conditions such as may have been created by the commencement, in or about November 1582, of Shakespeare's periods of absence from Stratford, or the necessity for a departure hastily decided upon at that time. But, whether or not the true reason for the licence is to be found in one of these alternatives, both are in agreement with the few known facts as well as with the older traditions, except those preserved by Rowe, and they are open to no other objection than that the conclusions to which they lead are at variance with some of the theories based upon his account.

¹ Edmond Malone, *Plays and Poems of Shakespeare*, 1821, p. 121. *Outlines*, i. 69.

Beyond such authentic notices as are to be found in the Stratford-upon-Avon parish register and the Worcester diocesan records, the principal sources of information as to the history of the first twenty-eight years of Shakespeare's life are confined to traditions, mainly collected during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

The earliest of these, so far as they relate to his first occupations, marriage, departure from Stratford, and other personal matters, are given by the following writers:—

JOHN AUBREY (1626-1697), an antiquary who, probably about 1662, included Stratford-upon-Avon in one of his journeys in search of literary material, and whose observations are recorded in a manuscript which is now in the Ashmolean Museum.¹ The following is taken from '*Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey between the years 1669 and 1696*, Edited from the Author's MSS. by Dr. Andrew Clark, pp. 225-7:

"Mr. William Shakespear was borne at Stratford upon Avon in the county of Warwick. His father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a calfe he would doe it in a high style, and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this towne that was held not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance and coetanean, but dyed young.² This William being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guesse, about 18; and was an actor at one of the play-houses, and did act exceedingly well (Now B. Johnson was never a good actor but an excellent instructor). He began early to make essayes at dramatique poetry, which at that time was very lowe; and his playes tooke well. He was a handsome, well shap't man: very good company, and of a very readie and pleasant smooth witt. The humour of . . . the constable, in *Midsomer-night's Dreame*, he happened to take

¹ In an edition of Aubrey's notes, dated 1813, i. iv., it is stated that "they were originally designed as memoranda for the use of Anthony à Wood, when composing his *Athenæ Ozoniensæ*."

² See J. O. Halliwell, *Was Nicholas Ap Roberts that Butcher's Son?* 1864.

at Grendon in Bucks—I think it was Midsomer night that he happened to lye there—which is the roade from London to Stratford, and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxon: Mr. Josias Howe is of the parish and knew him. Ben Johnson and he did gather humours of men dayly wherever they came. One time as he was at the tavern at Stratford-super-Avon, one Combes, an old rich usurer, was to be buried, he makes there this extemporary epitaph,—Ten in the hundred the devill allowes, = But Combes will have twelve he sweares and voves; = If any one askes who lies in this tombe; = ‘Hoh!’ quoth the Devill, ‘Tis my John o’ Combe!’—He was wont to goe to his native countrey once a yeare. I thinke I have been told that he left 2 or 300 li. per annum there and thereabout to a sister. Vide his epitaph in Dugdale’s Warwickshire. I have heard Sir William Davenant and Mr. Thomas Shadwell (who is counted the best comœdian we have now) say that he had a most prodigious witt, and did admire his naturall parts beyond all other dramaticall writers. He was wont to say (B. Johnson’s *Underwoods*) that he ‘never blotted out a line in his life’; sayd Ben Johnson, ‘I wish he had blotted out a thousand.’ His comœdies will remaine witt as long as the English tongue is understood, for that he handles *mores hominum*. Now our present writers reflect so much upon particular persons and coxcombeities, that 20 yeares hence they will not be understood. Though as Ben Johnson sayes of him, that he had but little Latine and lesse Greek, he understood Latine pretty well, for he had been in his younger yeares a schoolmaster in the countrey.—From Mr. . . Beeston.”¹

THOMAS FULLER (1608–1661) — *The History of the Worthies of England*. This was first published in 1662. The date of writing is not known:

“William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon in this county, in whom three eminent poets may seem in some sort to be compounded,—1. Martial in the warlike sound of his sur-name, (whence some may conjecture him of a military

¹ Aubrey’s observations on Beeston are given in the Appendix, No. XXIX.

extraction). *Hasti-vibrans* or Shake-speare.—2. Ovid, the most naturall and witty of all poets, and hence it was that Queen Elizabeth, coning into a grammar-school made this extemporary verse,—‘*Persius a crab-staffe, bawdy Martial, Ovid a fine wag.*’—3. Plautus, who was an exact comædian yet never any scholar, as our Shake-speare (if alive), would confess himself. Adde to all these, that though his genius generally was jocular and inclining him to festivity, yet he could (when so disposed), be solemn and serious, as appears by his tragedies; so that Heraclitus himself (I mean if secret and unseen), might afford to smile at his comedies, they were so merry, and Democritus scarce forbear to sigh at his tragedies, they were so mournfull. He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *poeta non fit sed nascitur*,—one is not made but born a poet. Indeed, his learning was very little; so that, as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed even as they are taken out of the earth, so nature itself was all the art which was used upon him. Many were the wit combates betwixt him and Ben Johnson, which two I behold like a Spanish great gallion and an English man-of-war. Master Johnson (like the former), was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shake-spear, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention. He died anno Domini 16 . . . , and was buried at Stratford-upon-Avon, the town of his nativity.”

THE REV^D. JOHN WARD, M.A. (1629–1681), Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon from 1662 to 1681, whose notes were made in a commonplace book, now in the library of the Medical Society of London :

“Shakespear had but 2 daughters, one whereof Mr. Hall, y^r physitian married, and by her had one daughter, to wit, y^r Lady Bernard of Abbingdon. I have heard y^t Mr. Shakespear was a natural wit, without any art at all; hee frequented y^r plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford and supplied y^r stage with 2 plays every year, and for y^t had

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an allowance so large, y^t hee spent att y^e rate of a 1000*l*. a year as I have heard. Shakespear, Drayton and Ben Johnson had a merrie meeting, and itt seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted. Remember to peruse Shakespear's plays and bee versed in them, that I may not bee ignorant in that matter. This booke was begunne Feb. 14, 1661, and finished April y^e 25, 1663, at Mr. Brooks, his house in Stratford-uppon-Avon in Warwickshire."¹

THE REVD. WILLIAM FULMAN (1632-1688), Rector of Meysey Hampton, Gloucestershire, from 1669 to 1688. His manuscript is now preserved at Corpus Christi College Oxford. Malone says that after being ejected from this College "by the Parliamentary visitors he became tutor to the children of Mr Peto of Chesterton Warwickshire where for seven years he found a comfortable retreat. His researches appear to have begun about the year 1670" (*Life*, 1821. Note on page 120):

"William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire about 1563-4. From an actor of playes he became a composer."

THE REVD. RICHARD DAVIES (. . . -1708), Rector of Sapperton, Gloucestershire, from March 1695-6 to July 1708,² is supposed, on good authority, to have made, before 1708, the following additions to Fulman's manuscript:

"Much given to all unluckinesse in stealing venison and Rabbits, particularly from Sir — Lucy who had him oft whipt and sometimes imprisoned and at last made him fly his native country to his great advancem^t, but his reveng was so great that he is his Justice Clodpate and calls him a great man, and y^t in allusion to his name bore three lowses rampant for his arms. . . . He dyed a papist."

Halliwell-Phillipps says: "There is no evidence in the manuscript itself that the interesting additions were made by Davies, but the fact is established by the identity of the hand-

¹ The above extract has been compared by the Registrar, Mr. W. B. Hall. See also *Diary of the Rev. John Ward, A.M., Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon*. Extending from 1648 to 1679. Arranged by Charles Severn, M.D., 1839.

² I am indebted to the Revd. H. Taylor Cropper, Vicar of Sapperton, for these dates, and to the Librarian of Corpus Christi College for verifying the extracts.

writing with that in one of his autographical letters preserved in the same collection."¹

JOHN DOWDALL, on visiting Shakespeare's tomb, in 1693, received from the parish clerk, William Castle,² the following information, which he included in a letter written at Butlers Marston, Warwickshire, dated April 10th, 1693, signed "John at Stiles," and addressed to a Mr. Edward Southwell:

"The first remarkable place in this county that I visited, was Stratford-super-Avon, where I saw the effigies of our English tragedian, Mr. Shakspeare : . . . The clarke that shewd me this church is above 80 y^r old he says that this Shakespear was formerly in this Towne bound apprentice to a butcher ; but that he Run from his master to London & there was Rec^d into the play house as a serviture, & by this meanes had an opportunity to be w^t he afterwards prov'd. He was the best of his family but the male Line is extinguish'd. Not one for feare of the Curse aboves^d Dare Touch his Grave Stone tho his wife and Daughters Did earnestly Desire to be Layd in the same Grave wth him."³

NICHOLAS ROWE (1674-1718). To an edition of the plays published in 1709 this writer prefixed *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespear*, from which the following extracts are taken :

"He was the Son of Mr. John Shakespear, and was born at Stratford upon Avon, in Warwickshire, in April 1564. His family, as appears by the register and public writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mention'd as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that tho' he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, 'tis true,

¹ *Outlines*, ii. 71.

² William Castle was born at Stratford in 1614. "1614; July 17 Gulielmus filius Gulielmi Castell." *Register of Baptisms*.

³ *Traditionary Anecdotes of Shakespeare collected in Warwickshire in the year MDCCXIII*. London, Thomas Rodd, 1838. See also *The Works of William Shakespeare*, by J. O. Halliwell, 1853, i. 77-8, from which the above is copied. I have not succeeded in finding the original MS. for verification. For further observations on this subject, see Appendix, No. XXX.

for some time at a free-school, where 'tis probable he acquir'd that little Latin he was master of: But the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forc'd his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. . . . Upon his leaving school, he seems to have given intirely into that way of living which his father propos'd to him; and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In this kind of settlement he continu'd for some time, 'till an extravagance that he was guilty of, forc'd him both out of his country and that way of living which he had taken up; and tho' it seem'd at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily prov'd the occasion of exerting one of the greatest genius's that ever was known in dramatick poetry. He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engag'd him with them more than once in robbing a park that belong'd to Sir Thomas Lucy of Cherlecot, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And tho' this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was oblig'd to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London. It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance in the play-house. He was receiv'd into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank; but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguish'd him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of the other players, before some old plays, but without any particular account of

what sort of parts he used to play; and though I have enquired, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet. I should have been much more pleas'd, to have learn'd from some certain authority, which was the first play he wrote. . . . Mr. Dryden seems to think that *Pericles* is one of his first plays; but there is no judgment to be form'd on that, since there is good reason to believe that the greatest part of that play was not written by him; . . . Besides the advantages of his wit, he was in himself a good-natur'd man, of great sweetness in his manners, and a most agreeable companion; so that it is no wonder if with so many good qualities he made himself acquainted with the best conversations of those times. Queen Elizabeth had several of his plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour. . . . She was so well pleas'd with that admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry the Fourth*, that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. . . . What grace soever the Queen confer'd upon him, it was not to her only he ow'd the fortune which the reputation of his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of Southampton, famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of Essex. It was to that noble lord that he dedicated his *Venus and Adonis*, the only piece of his poetry which he ever publish'd himself, tho' many of his plays were surreptitiously and lamely printed in his lifetime. There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakespear's, that, if I had not been assur'd that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventur'd to have inserted; that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost

equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shewn to French dancers and Italian eunuchs. . . . His acquaintance with Ben Johnson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good nature ;—Mr. Johnson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offer'd one of his plays to the players in order to have it acted ; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turn'd it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natur'd answer that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakespear luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Johnson and his writings to the publick. After this they were profess'd friends ; tho' I don't know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. Ben was naturally proud and insolent, and, in the days of his reputation, did so far take upon him the supremacy in wit, that he could not but look with an evil eye upon any one that seem'd to stand in competition with him . . . Falstaff is allow'd by every body to be a master-piece. . . . Amongst other extravagances, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, he has made him a dear-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor under the name of Justice Shallow ; he has given him very near the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there, and makes the Welsh parson descant very pleasantly upon 'em. . . . I cannot leave *Hamlet* without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this master-piece of Shakespear distinguish itself upon the stage by Mr. Betterton's fine performance of that part. . . . I must own a particular obligation to him for the most considerable part of the passages relating to his life which I have here transmitted to the publick ; his veneration for the memory of Shakespear having engag'd him to make a journey into Warwickshire on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a value.—The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends.

He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion, and, in that, to his wish; and is said to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford. His pleasurable wit and good nature engag'd him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. . . . He had three daughters, of which two liv'd to be marry'd; Judith, the elder, to one Mr. Thomas Quiney, by whom she had three sons, who all dy'd without children; and Susannah, who was his favourite, to Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country. She left one child only, a daughter, who was marry'd first to Thomas Nash, esq.; and afterwards to Sir John Bernard of Abbingdon, but dy'd likewise without issue. This is what I could learn of any note either relating to himself or family. The character of the man is best seen in his writings."¹

The following tradition as to Shakespeare's early days in London is related in *Oibber's Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland*, i. 130-1. (By Robert Shiels and others. First published in 1753): "Here I cannot forbear relating a story which Sir William Davenant told Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe; Rowe told it Mr. Pope, and Mr. Pope told it to Dr. Newton, the late editor of Milton, and from a gentleman who heard it from him, 'tis here related. Concerning Shakespeare's first appearance in the playhouse. When he came to London, he was without money and friends, and being a stranger he knew not to whom to apply, nor by what means to support himself.—At that time coaches not being in use, and as gentlemen were accustomed to ride to the playhouse, Shakespear, driven to the last necessity, went to the playhouse door, and pick'd up a little money by taking care of the gentlemen's horses who came to the play; he became eminent even in that profession, and was taken notice of for his diligence and skill in it; he had soon more business than he himself could manage and at last hired boys under him, who were known by the name of Shakespear's boys: Some of

¹ *The Works of William Shakespear*. Printed for Jacob Tonson at Gray's Inn Gate. 1709.

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the players accidentally conversing with him, found him so acute and master of so fine a conversation, that, struck therewith, they [*sic.*] and recommended him to the house, in which he was first admitted in a very low station, but he did not long remain so for he soon distinguished himself, if not as an extraordinary actor at least as a fine writer." In quoting from this account Campbell says: "The gentleman who heard it from Mr. Newton was undoubtedly either Dr. Johnson, who relates it himself, or his amanuensis, Shield, who wrote no small part of Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*."¹

Dr. Johnson, in his preface to the Plays,² says that "Shakespeare came to London a needy adventurer and lived for a time by very mean employments."

To these direct references may be added a probable allusion to Shakespeare in Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, the earliest edition of which was published in 1592.³ (Fo: 3) "Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his tyger's heart, wrapt in a Player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse, as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a countrie."

The following apology for this attack was soon afterwards published by Greene's friend Henry Chettle who edited the *Groatsworth of Wit*: "With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them, I care not if I never be; the other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heate of living writers, I mighte have usde my owne discretion, especially in such a case, the author beeing dead, that I did not I am as sory, as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his

¹ *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, 1859, i. xxi. See also *Outlines*, i. 80-8.

² First published in 1765.

³ Robert Greene died September 3rd, 1592.

honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that aprooves his art."¹

The poet's knowledge of the law and its terms has suggested the probability that he is alluded to by Thomas Nash in the following passage in his prefatory epistle to Greene's *Menaphon*: "It is a common practise now a daies amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every arte and thrive by none, to leave the trade of Noverint whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indevors of Art, that could scarcelye Latinize their necke-verse if they shoulde have neede²; yet English Seneca read by candle light yeeldes manie good sentences, as Bloud is a begger, and so foorth: and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfulls of tragical speaches." It is, however, considered doubtful whether this is an allusion to Shakespeare or his *Hamlet*.

Another tradition relating to Shakespeare's early employment in the theatre is recorded by Malone: "There is a stage tradition, that his first office in the theatre was that of Call-boy, or prompter's attendant; whose employment it is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter, as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage."³

The story of the revelry at Bidford⁴ and the naming of Luddington Chapel as the place of the marriage⁵ appear to have remained unnoticed by authors until later dates, and cannot therefore be regarded as possessing the same value, although they may not be wholly spurious. Only three of the foregoing accounts give, even approximately, the date of

¹ *Kind Hart's Dream*. These are, probably, allusions to Marlowe and Shakespeare. See Howard Staunton, *The Works of Shakespeare*, i. xxix.-xxxiii., and *Notes and Queries*, January 81st, 1903, p. 97.

² Dr. Arber says that Nash "is only referring to Verse Translators; first from the classics; secondly from the Italian. It has been thought that herein he referred to Shakespeare; but the date is too early, and our great poet is not known to have translated anything of the kind." Introduction to *Robert Greene*, pp. xii. and xiii. (*The English Scholar's Library of Old and Modern Works*.)

³ *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, 1790, i. 107, note 6.

⁴ *Outlines*, i. 234; ii. 325-8. See Appendix, No. XXXI.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 364.

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Shakespeare's departure from Stratford, and Aubrey's is no more definite than about his eighteenth year.

Rowe's version may mean that Shakespeare left Warwickshire to take shelter in London a few months or years after the birth of his first child, and that it was either a temporary removal, to allow Sir Thomas Lucy's anger to cool, or a long continued absence.

The parish-clerk's statement to Dowdall that Shakespeare "run from his master to London" will, if trustworthy, apply to any date between his apprenticeship at an early age and the termination of his period of service as late as his 24th year;¹ but this tradition confirms Rowe and Aubrey in naming the metropolis as the poet's destination on leaving Stratford.²

Aubrey, unless a wide meaning be allowed to his words, appears to place the departure at an earlier date than Rowe, who, in the expression "some time," permits a latitude of which advantage has been taken to name the years between 1582 and 1588. Some approach to agreement between the two accounts would, however, be possible if the purport of Rowe's could be limited to the first of these years, for Aubrey's "about eighteen" is sufficiently elastic to include the birth of Susanna in May 1583, early in her father's nineteenth year, and both of these interpretations agree with the tradition recorded by Dowdall. But, however much this reading of Rowe's statement may commend itself, the construction generally placed upon it, together with the more restricted meaning now proposed to be applied to Aubrey's account, makes the difference too great to be thus disposed of, and the comparative reliability of the two authorities arises for consideration.

Aubrey's brief memoirs have found slight favour with some authors on account of an alleged proneness to irresponsible gossip and the known inaccuracies which mark some of his biographical sketches. He is represented by Anthony à Wood, who was at one time his friend and to whom many of his notes

¹ The age at which apprenticeships then sometimes terminated.

² See remarks on Dowdall's letter, Appendix, No. XXX.

were communicated, as "a pretender to antiquities. . . . He was a shiftless person, roving and magotie headed and sometimes little better than crased. And being exceedingly credulous, would stuff his many letters sent to A. W. with folliries, and misinformations, which sometimes would guid him into the paths of errorr."¹

After referring in favourable terms to Ward's allusion to Shakespeare, Halliwell-Phillipps says: "The same observation cannot unfortunately be thought to hold good in respect to the next reporter, John Aubrey, who, about the same period, visited Stratford-on-Avon in one of his equestrian journeys. This industrious antiquary was the author of numerous little biographies, which are here and there disfigured by such palpable or ascertained blunders, that it would appear that he must have been in the habit of compiling from imperfect notes of conversations, or, no doubt in many instances, from his own recollections of them. He was unfortunately also one of those foolish and detestable gossips who record everything that they hear or misinterpret. . . . It would, therefore, be hazardous as a rule to depend upon his statements in the absence of corroborative evidence, but we may at the same time in a great measure rely upon the accuracy of main facts in those cases in which there is too much elaboration for his memory to have been entirely at fault."²

The same writer subsequently refers to Aubrey as "this undoubtedly honest, though careless, antiquary;"³ and again as "that most unreliable of all the early biographers."⁴

Testimony of a more favourable character is however given by Malone in criticizing Anthony à Wood's opinion of Aubrey: "It is acknowledged, that his literary attainments were considerable; that he was a man of good parts, of much learning and great application; and good Latin poet, an excellent naturalist, and, what is more material to our present object, a

¹ *The Life of Anthony à Wood*, written by Himself, and published by Mr. Thomas Hearne, 1772, pp. 208-9.

² *Outlines*, Preface, i. x.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 250, note 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 297, note 113.

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great lover of and indefatigable searcher into antiquities. . . . Wood afterwards quarreled with Mr. Aubrey, whom in the second volume of his *Fasti*, he calls his friend. . . . To Wood every lover of antiquity and literary history has very high obligations; and in all matters of fact he may be safely relied on; but his opinion of men and things is of little value. . . . Whatever Wood in a peevish humour may have thought or said of Mr. Aubrey, by whose labours he highly profited, or however fantastical Aubrey may have been on the subject of chemistry and ghosts, his character for veracity has never been impeached; and as a very diligent antiquarian, his testimony is worthy of attention. Mr. Toland, who was well acquainted with him, and certainly a better judge of men than Wood, gives this character of him: 'Though he was extremely superstitious, or seemed to be so, yet he was a very honest man, and most accurate in his account of matters of fact.'"¹

In a recent account of Aubrey, Dr. Richard Garnett says: "Unfortunately one of Aubrey's notes reflecting on Lord Chancellor Clarendon, caused Wood to be visited by a prosecution; and this seems to have occasioned an estrangement and to have prompted the unfavourable character which Wood has left of his disinterested if not always judicious ally. His character as an antiquary has been unworthily traduced by Anthony à Wood, but fully vindicated by his recent editors and biographers."²

In commenting upon Aubrey's *Lives* the Revd. Dr. Andrew Clark says: "Their value lies not in the statement of bibliographical or other facts, but in their remarkably vivid personal touches, in what Aubrey had seen himself and what his friends had told him."³

Aubrey's narrative offers little opportunity for further criticism. He is cautious in his statements about Shakespeare, and the only error proved against him—the reference to the poet's legacy to a sister—is prefaced by a doubt. The phrase

¹ Historical Account of the English Stage. See also Malone's *Life of William Shakespeare*, 1821, ii. 71-2, 694-7.

² Dictionary of National Biography, ii. 245.

³ *Brief Lives* . . . by John Aubrey, pp. 7-8.

in which he refers to Shakespeare's removal to London and the date of the transmission of the *Lives* to Wood may justify a suspicion that there was some delay in making a note of the results of his visit to Stratford; but the suggestion of youth is of value as his impression of the story as he received it. In face of the testimony in Aubrey's favour it would be unwise to ignore his contribution on the point in dispute. With all its defects, his account of the removal appears to be the most important record of any of the traditions of Shakespeare's early life.

Rowe's reputation as a biographer of Shakespeare rests partly upon the fact that his work was the first attempt to give the life-history in a connected form, and some additional importance is no doubt due to the few lines in which he expresses his obligation to Betterton,¹ from whom the greater part of the incidents of the early life of the poet were probably obtained. Rowe appears to have accepted them without testing their correctness by a reference to sources of information that must, in his day, have been more ample than the few items constituting this part of his memoir would lead us to infer.² Poor as were the results of Betterton's enquiries, yet Rowe's curiosity may have been satisfied; and he evidently failed to realize the keen interest which would eventually be taken in every detail of the poet's history.³ The opinions of recent commentators are generally favourable as to the reliability of Rowe's account. Halliwell-Phillipps says: "No sufficient reason has yet been given for impugning Rowe's general accuracy. There are, indeed, a few errors in the minor details of his biographical sketch, but that he drew it up mainly from reliable sources is unquestionable. . . . That he exercised also unusual caution in dealing with his materials is obvious from the prelude to the Southampton anecdote, as well as from the hesitating manner in which he introduces many of his statements. It is scarcely necessary to observe that this prudence

¹ Betterton was born in 1635 (?) and died in 1710.

² Many of the wills proved in the Stratford Peculiar Court as well as some of the registers of neighbouring parishes have since been lost.

³ But see the first few lines of his memoir.

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has added immeasurably to his credibility, and rendered every word of his essay deserving of respectful attention.”¹

Dr. Sidney Lee's opinion of Rowe's work is given in his article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, xlix. 343. “In the prefatory life Rowe embodied a series of traditions which he had commissioned the actor Betterton to collect for him while on a visit to Stratford-upon-Avon²; many of them were in danger of perishing without a record. Rowe displayed much sagacity in the choice and treatment of his biographic materials, and the memoir is consequently of permanent value.”

As there is no reason for supposing that Rowe's account conveys erroneous impressions of the information received from Betterton, its credibility depends upon the genuineness of the traditions so communicated, and it is unfortunate that some doubt exists as to whether they were obtained on the alleged visit to Warwickshire. Betterton's good faith in this matter is not questioned by Malone, who says: “In the manuscript papers of the late Mr. Oldys, as Mr. Steevens relates, ‘it is said that one Boman (according to Chetwood, p. 143, an actor more than half an age on the London Theatres’) was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary, Betterton, had ever undertaken this journey. This assertion of Mr. Oldys appears to me altogether unworthy of credit, not that I believe he meant to deceive, but he certainly must have misapprehended Mr. Boman. Why any doubt should be insinuated, or entertained, concerning Mr. Betterton's having visited Stratford, after Rowe's positive assertion that he did so, it is not easy to conceive. Mr. Rowe did not go there himself; and how could he have collected the few circumstances relative to Shakspeare and his family, which he has told, if he had not obtained the information from some friend, who examined the register of the parish of Stratford and made personal enquiries on the subject?’³ . . . Mr. Betterton, though he was born about twenty years after Shakspeare's death, and had trod the stage before the Restoration, instead of making any enquiry about him in

¹ *Outlines*, i. xii.—xiii.

² See Appendix, No. XXXII.

³ *The Life of William Shakspeare*, 1821, p. 120, note 5.

his youth, when that enquiry might perhaps have been attended with success, was obliged to go to Stratford in 1708, when he was above seventy years old, and our poet had been dead near a century, to pick up what intelligence he could get concerning him: and almost every part of the intelligence which he did procure, either there or elsewhere, proves to be erroneous."¹

An opinion adverse to the authenticity of Rowe's information is given by Mr. J. T. Foard: "And Bowman, the actor, who lived with him, having married Betterton's daughter, Miss Watson, denied that the actor had ever visited Stratford; or in the precise words of the antiquarian Oldys, a truthful man, he (Bowman) was 'unwilling to allow that his life long associate and friend (Betterton) had ever undertaken such a journey.' . . . It is disputed on the best authority available at the time that Betterton ever went to Warwickshire. Thus the source (the *fons et origo*)—as he (Rowe) declares of all his information—is tainted at its inception; and as far as any precise details are concerned, we may therefore set it aside altogether."²

One of the errors in the "minor details" referred to by Halliwell-Phillipps led Rowe to the conclusion that the poet's early education had suffered by reason of his father's large family, "ten children in all," when, in fact, only three sons and two daughters survived at the time William is supposed to have been taken from school:³ Shakespeare's children are referred to as three daughters; Judith is named as the eldest; and no mention is made of his son Hamnet.⁴

It would, perhaps, be unfair to judge Betterton's work by the standard that might properly be applied to that of a modern investigator. Difficulties may have been placed in his way by the general apathy then prevailing on the subject of the poet's personal history, and, although descendants of Joan Hart, the poet's sister, and members of the Hathaway

¹ *The Life of William Shakespeare*, 1821, p. 163.

² *English Shakespeareana*, reprinted from the *Manchester Quarterly*, January 1898.

³ See G. R. French, *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, pp. 367-70, and the Parish Register of Stratford-upon-Avon, edited by Mr. Richard Savage.

⁴ Rowe, *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare*.

family were still living at Stratford at the date of Betterton's enquiries,¹ they may have had no better knowledge than their neighbours of the youth of their illustrious kinsman, whose papers or other aids to memory an earlier generation probably had not cared to preserve.²

While some of the more important facts were still remembered at Stratford and would have been accessible to Betterton, if he had known where to look for them, the minor incidents had, no doubt, already become so much obscured by variations and additions as to make it possible for a careless enquirer to mistake legend for history and to mingle the poet's youthful escapades with the occurrences of his more mature years. If Rowe's information as to John Shakespeare's or the poet's children or Anne Hathaway's parentage was the best he could obtain, some doubt may be permitted as to the correctness of his reference to the interval between the marriage and departure from Stratford, his knowledge of these events probably having been derived from the same source. Whatever may be the cause of these defects in the few particulars of Shakespeare's life recorded by Rowe, they disentitle him to any claim to superior credit for those parts of his account that are at variance with previously recorded traditions. For the statement that Shakespeare remained at Stratford some time after the marriage there is no other support than the conclusions drawn from the births of his children.

In deciding whether Aubrey or Rowe gives the more correct account of the date of Shakespeare's first visit to London, biographers must be guided largely by independent evidence and probability. The many imperfections in these early narratives, from which details of great interest, from a literary as well as a personal point of view, are strangely omitted, suggest the probability that neither of the writers was able to form a correct idea of the poet's position at the date of his

¹ *Outlines*, ii. 251, note 6. G. E. French, *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, pp. 376-401. See Appendix, No. XXXII.

² Karl Elze, *William Shakespeare, A Literary Biography*, p. 5; *Outlines*, i. 274. See also *Theobald's Preface* for a tradition as to the destruction of some of Shakespeare's papers by a Warwick baker.

marriage and for some years afterwards, or to understand the real meaning of the migrations between Stratford and London. Both are under the suspicion of not having made the best of their opportunities, particularly in the matter of documentary evidence;¹ and their frequent admissions of doubt, though a testimony to honesty of purpose, do not encourage implicit belief in the traditions they record. But, upon the point now under discussion, the advantage is considerably in Aubrey's favour.²

After the appearance of Rowe's biography, very little information of importance was added during the eighteenth century until the results of Malone's researches were published; but the success which attended his more systematic method stimulated further enquiry, and a growing interest in all that pertains to the history of the poet has resulted in a constantly increasing mass of biographical literature.

By modern writers various opinions have been expressed as to the date of Shakespeare's departure from Stratford, Dr. Sidney Lee³ giving "the later months of the year 1585;" Mr. George Wyndham,⁴ "between the opening of 1585 and the autumn of 1587;" Drake,⁵ "about the year 1586 or 1587;" Mr. F. G. Fleay,⁶ "in or about 1587;" and George Chalmers,⁷ "between the years 1585 and 1588." Only a few writers give an earlier date than 1585. Kenny says: "It probably took place some time about the year 1586; but it may have happened, for all that we know with any certainty, a few years earlier, or even—although this is more unlikely—a few years later than that period."⁸

Mr. Henry Stebbing says: "Hence we may properly

¹ For notes on the dates of their enquiries at Stratford, see Appendix, No. XXXII.

² Mr. Beeston, his informant, was the son of Christopher Beeston, "Shakespeare's fellow-comedian." Malone, *Historical Account of the English Stage*.

³ *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 26.

⁴ *The Poems of Shakespeare*, p. xxv.

⁵ *Shakespeare and His Times*, i. 410.

⁶ *A Chronicle History*, pp. 91-5.

⁷ *An Apology*, p. 48.

⁸ *The Life and Genius of Shakespeare*, 1864, p. 28.

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question the truth of Shakspeare's coming to London as an actor, when he was only eighteen. Still we must be careful, where so much uncertainty prevails, not to reject even this incident of Aubrey's narrative, as certainly untrue. Though we know that he married soon after he was eighteen, there is nothing so very improbable in the statement, that he shortly before this event visited London, and tried his fortune on the stage."¹

William Russell says that Shakespeare left Stratford for London in his 20th year, not long after the birth of his daughter Susanna.²

Mr. H. S. and Mrs. C. W. Ward give alternative dates for the removal: "The year 1585 has usually been assumed as that in which Shakespeare left his native place 'for London.' The only evidence on the point is the fact that his twin children Hamnet and Judith were baptised on February 2nd of that year. If we are to resolutely believe the deer-stealing story, it is perhaps convenient to fix this particular date, but if the idea we have above set forth is correct, it seems more likely that 1583 would be the year of leaving home."³

After expressing the conviction that Shakespeare left Stratford for London in 1585, Dr. Elze mentions a possible reference to the subject in the *Castell of Courtesie* by J. Yates, Servingman, London, 1582, John Wolfe: "There are on page 16 'Verses written at the departure of his friend W. S. when hee went to dwell in London.' . . . Can this W. S. have been William Shakespeare? If so, then he must have made an endeavour to move to London before 1582."⁴

Mr. Sidney Lanier gives a fanciful sketch of a visit to London in 1582, in which Shakespeare is represented as having been joined by Anne Hathaway.⁵

¹ *The Dramatic Works of William Shakspeare*, i. xxiii.

² *Extraordinary Men, Their Boyhood and Early Life*, p. 39.

³ "And if Shakespeares could be stubborn, Ardens could show the 'fulness of blood and greatness of heart' of which Burleigh wrote, as was proved in this very year, 1583, when Arden was executed at Smithfield for an alleged plot against the Queen." *Shakespeare's Town and Times*, pp. 114-6.

⁴ *William Shakespeare, A Literary Biography*, p. 115.

⁵ *Shakspeare and His Forerunners*, i. 125-65.

Fullom suggests that the poaching occurred before the marriage, and resulted in an absence, commencing in the spring of 1582. "Some time between July and September, 1582, Shakespeare returned to Stratford. . . . At the beginning of July he must have heard of the death of Richard Hathaway, which removed an obstacle to his early marriage with Anne. . . . Certainly he had established himself in London shortly after the birth of his first child, when he was in his twentieth year."¹ For most of these statements no authority is given, and it is not explained by Fullom why Richard Hathaway's death should have removed an obstacle to the marriage, which, it is generally considered, was strongly desired by Anne's friends.

Another view of Shakespeare's position during the obscure period of his life between 1582 and 1592 is that he never gave up his residence at Stratford, and that the incident referred to by Aubrey and Dowdall should be regarded merely as the first of a series of more or less prolonged visits to the metropolis and other places. On the subject of Shakespeare's settlement in Stratford, George Chalmers says: "I doubt, if the poet ever brought his family from Stratford, or ever considered London as his home."² "Where he thus settled, he probably resolved, that his wife and family should remain through life; although he himself made frequent excursions to London."³ Drake was of the opinion that "the family residence of Shakspeare was always at Stratford; that he himself originally went alone to London, and that he spent the greater part of every year there alone, annually, however, and probably for some months, returning to the bosom of his family."⁴ A different opinion is held by Mr. F. G. Fleay: "The natural interpretation of such records as have reached us is that it was not till touched by the hand of the great reconciler Death, in the person of the expected heir to his new-founded fortunes, that he ever visited his family at all during

¹ *History of William Shakespeare*, pp. 144, 194, 211.

² *An Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare Papers*, 1799, p. 247.

³ *A Supplemental Apology*, p. 227.

⁴ *Shakespeare and His Times*, 1817, i. 416.

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the nine years since he left them to carve his own way as a strolling player."¹ Mr. Appleton Morgan says: "At any rate we do know that the great William lived apart from his wife, and that such visits as he paid to Stratford may almost always be found indicated by an investment, a law suit, or an arbitration, whereby the thrifty poet did largely increase the body of wealth he left his children."²

There is no evidence by means of which any one of the opposing views can be substantiated, but Drake's appears to be by far the most probable.

The foregoing selections show that, apart from minor differences, the opinions of a considerable majority are in favour of that interpretation of Rowe's statement which gives 1585 as the earliest and 1588 as the latest date for the commencement of an absence from Stratford which was broken only by brief and, at first, infrequent visits until the poet's final retirement from active work in the London theatres. Only a few writers prefer earlier dates, some of which go back to the spring of 1582.

The only reason mentioned in the older traditions for Shakespeare's departure from his native town is the persecution following upon the double offence of stealing Sir Thomas Lucy's game and then lampooning him, an episode which has been a fruitful source of discussion.³ That it was the sole cause is not generally believed, but many modern writers accept some version of the poaching adventure, about which there appears to be nothing improbable, except, perhaps, most of the dates assigned to the closing scene.

For the purpose of the present enquiry, the only opinions as to the date and cause of the great change in Shakespeare's life that require further comment are those relating to the generally accepted meaning of Rowe's words, "In this kind of settlement he remained for some time," which period is construed by Halliwell-Phillipps to be "Three or four years after

¹ *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare*, p. 29.

² *Shakespeare in Fact and in Criticism*, p. 277.

³ See Mrs. C. C. Stopes, "Justice Shallow," *Fortnightly Review*, February 1903.

his union with Anne Hathaway,"¹ There appears to be no reason for interpreting the text with such liberality, or for naming any particular number of years, inasmuch as Rowe hesitated to do so, except to bring his version into agreement with the theory, to which some importance has been attached by other writers, that Shakespeare continued to reside at Stratford until after the births of Hamnet and Judith.² With this postulate there is no difficulty in dispensing, if any reliance is to be placed upon the tradition which credits the poet with a visit to his native country once a year.³

This reading of Rowe's words puts obstacles in the way of a solution of the difficulties arising from the nature of the evidence as to the date of the removal to London; for neither the traditions, nor the poet's writings, nor the marriage documents, nor any conclusions to be fairly drawn from them, justify the various conjectures, mainly based on Rowe's account, that Shakespeare continued to reside at Stratford for some years after his marriage, leading a wild and irregular life,⁴ and that after "four years of conjugal discord"⁵ he left his native town a penniless fugitive in fear of arrest for poaching and debt,⁶ adding to other offences the desertion of his family.⁷ How much of this is capable of proof may be gathered from the evidences reviewed in these pages; how little of it is likely to be true is indicated by the literary and financial successes that followed so closely as to justify a suspicion of the correctness of every detail of this sordid picture of the first few years of Shakespeare's married life. There may have been much in his environment, and possibly in his own disposition,

¹ *Outlines*, i. 67.

² See E. Malone, *Historical Account of the English Stage*, and Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 26.

³ Aubrey.

⁴ See Rowe; *Outlines*, i. 67; and G. G. Gervinus, *Shakespeare Commentaries*, pp. 30-4.

⁵ Thomas De Quincey, *Shakespeare, A Biography*, p. 56.

⁶ See *Outlines*, i. 70 and 78-9; Alexander Dyce, *The Poems of Shakespeare* (Aldine edition), p. xi.; George Chalmers, *Apology*, p. 48; and N. Drake, *Shakespeare and His Times*, i. 413.

⁷ F. G. Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare*, p. 29.

unfavourable to an early development of his higher gifts; yet it is improbable that the varied powers displayed in after-life lay dormant until his 23rd year. Nor can apathy be justly ascribed to Shakespeare at a time when ordinary men feel the stimulus of increasing responsibilities; and it is unlikely that for so many years after his marriage he could have remained content in his supposed miserable plight and have failed to realize that such a life would never satisfy his ambition, or that he made no attempt or found no opportunity to escape from it until compelled to leave Stratford in disgrace. In spite of the unpromising nature of his latest youthful employment at Stratford, the schoolmaster tradition renders it probable that there was some sort of continuity in his education after his school-days.¹ He was connected with families of substantial position, and could not have been without friends;² he was energetic,³ and possessed sufficient business capacity to enable him to turn to good account such opportunities as came in his way; and so keen a student of human nature must have gained some experience of life at a comparatively early age.

With these things in his favour, it may appear that such advantages as would have accrued to him from the earlier removal to London were not essential to success, and that in order to attain the position he held in 1593 the additional years thus secured would not have been requisite. It may be admitted that, if all other conditions were favourable, such a combination of talents as he undoubtedly possessed would account for the rapid advancement that would be implied by the later arrival. But, while this of necessity presupposes some equipment for his literary work and the existence of circumstances favourable to his venture, some of the advocates of the later departure deny that facilities for study and improvement were to be found at Stratford,⁴ and surround his life there with conditions such as would have created serious impediments

¹ In this he may have been encouraged and assisted by his former teachers.

² C. O. Stopes, *The Bacon-Shakespeare Question Answered*, p. 10.

³ His industry is referred to by John Webster in the preface to the *White Devil*, 1612, "The right happy and copious industry of M. Shakspeare."

⁴ *Outlines*, i. 95 and 104.

to his future progress, whatever advantages may have been gained by the removal. Others depict the hardships of his early years in London and the "mean employments"¹ by which he was compelled to earn a living. And so, without the slightest proof, a supposed mode of life unfavourable to success in most of the things in which Shakespeare afterwards excelled is prolonged until, with all his ability, no adequate interval is allowed him to account for the great improvement in his fortunes or the wide knowledge and experience displayed in his earliest known writings. If no recollection of Shakespeare's budding talents had been preserved at Stratford, the absence of any tradition of the exercise of powers that made him famous would not call for remark. We have, however, the tradition related to the enquirer a century afterwards, that "when he kill'd a calfe he would do it in a high style and make a speech,"² and yet the poet's neighbours do not appear to have known that he possessed any other gift distinguishing him from his fellows.

When Shakespeare had once mastered the rudiments of learning, neither a "bookless neighbourhood"³ nor any other ordinary disadvantage, such as the scanty leisure enjoyed by an apprentice, would have long delayed some manifestation of his literary proclivities; and those who handed down the tradition of one of his characteristics would not have been slow to observe and appreciate the other. The local fame of these early flights was also quite as likely to have been preserved. Yet if we are to accept even the earlier dates of the departure founded on Rowe's account, it would appear that Shakespeare remained at Stratford-upon-Avon for about eight years after he left school (where he must, at any rate, have learned enough to enable him to give free expression to his thoughts) and, during this long period, evinced no literary tendencies—no sign of his remarkable gifts. With the exception of the Lucy doggerel,⁴ which is supposed to have been the immediate cause of

¹ Dr. Johnson's *Preface*, 1765.

² Aubrey. See also J. O. Halliwell's Folio edition of Shakespeare's Works, 1853, i. 78.

³ *Outlines*, i. 95.

⁴ The modern version of the alleged lampoon is, no doubt, spurious; but the original is generally supposed to have been written in 1585 or 1586.

his flight, there is no indication that he produced anything better worth preserving. The absence of local tradition as to earlier productions suggests the likelihood that he left Stratford before this additional proof of his originality had become as well known as the calf-killing speeches, and that the change was made in 1582 rather than four years later.

Aubrey's account allows ten years for that part of Shakespeare's career which commenced with his departure from Stratford and closed in 1593, when his success was already assured. This may, however, have been attained much earlier, for of his history during the decade we know nothing definitely beyond the baptisms of his children and the traditions of lowly beginnings in London related by Davenant to Betterton, and worthy of consideration, although omitted from Rowe's narrative. In the period between 1582 and 1593 he passed through his novitiate to a good position in the theatre and laid the foundation of a competence that enabled him a few years later to take a prominent place in his native town. These alone were creditable results for the work of ten years, even if he met with none of the difficulties usually encountered by those who have sought fortune in like manner. Although such dates as 1587 for *Venus and Adonis* and 1588-9 for *Love's Labour's Lost* are not founded upon any clear evidence,¹ they are probably not far from the truth; and both poem and play must have been preceded by work of great excellence and promise. That the above-named productions were the work of one whose reputed mode of life before the year 1587 gives little assurance of the possession of the necessary qualities, and who, about that time, is supposed to have commenced his career in London imperfectly educated and inexperienced, is open to grave doubt.

¹ For supposed dates of Shakespeare's earliest work, see Appendix, No. XXXIII.



VIII

FACTS AND CONJECTURES

IN the following sketches brief references are made to the main incidents of Shakespeare's personal history. Some further explanations, which have been rendered necessary by my readings of the evidence, together with conjectures based upon them or collected from various sources, are submitted. A separate statement of the facts, which I purpose giving in the next chapter, will bring out the fragmentary nature of the history, and will also serve as a corrective by enabling the reader to avoid the errors frequently caused by accepting conjecture and assumption as that which can be proved. In order to avoid the possibility of taking as fact any of the hypotheses current in the biographies and added to in these pages, it would be well to bear in mind that nothing is known with certainty about the history of Shakespeare's life from the date of his baptism, April 26th, 1564, to November 27th, 1582, when his marriage licence was granted, and that from the baptism of his children, Hamnet and Judith, on February 2nd, 1584-5, until the year 1593 the only undoubted contemporary reference to his name occurs in a Bill of Complaint,¹ dated 1589, in connection with a proposal made in 1587 by John and Mary Shakespeare to John Lambert, son of the original mortgagee of the Asbies estate. Much information as to the history of the Shakespeare and Hathaway families and their connexions has, however, been obtained from deeds relating to small

¹ For a copy of this document, in which William Shakespeare's name occurs, see *Outlines*, ii. 12.

properties in which they were interested, from diaries, wills, diocesan, parochial, and other registers, and from the municipal records of Stratford-upon-Avon. A knowledge of the conditions under which William Shakespeare's boyhood was passed has been derived, with some approach to the truth, from contemporary accounts of the manners and customs of the people among whom he was brought up, and from a less definite acquaintance with their modes of thought and opinions. All we know about Shakespeare during his earlier years in London is gleaned from the few traditions relating to his circumstances on arriving there and his introduction to the theatre. We have no trustworthy information earlier than 1593, when *Venus and Adonis*, with its dedication to Lord Southampton, was published. Thenceforth the more frequent references to Shakespeare include notices of the production of his poems and plays, and appreciations of his genius and personal character. There are accounts of business transactions indicative of interest in his native town and of the success which enabled him to raise his family to a higher rank than it had occupied in the days of his father's prosperity. Although his own position during the first twenty-eight years of his life was not sufficiently prominent to ensure a record of even its main incidents, and though he himself has given very little assistance to the biographer, we are now, probably, as well acquainted with his history as with that of most of his literary contemporaries. In dealing with so interesting a personality it is not surprising that the bounds of conjecture have been widely extended, or that common-place incidents, throwing no light upon his works and affording little or no insight into his mind or character, have been eagerly collected.

As to his lineage, we learn from the Stratford-upon-Avon parish register of baptisms that he was the son of John Shakespeare, who is supposed to have been the son of Richard Shakespeare of Snitterfield, a village about four miles distant from Stratford-upon-Avon. Even at this stage we begin to encounter the difficulties which are answerable for many disappointing results in attempting to trace the family pedigrees.

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On February 10th, 1560-1, a bond¹ was entered into by John Shakespere and Thomas Nycols, both described as husbandmen of Snitterfield, for the due administration of the estate of Richard Shakspere of that parish. In the memorandum of the grant² the administrator is described as his son; so that we have a John Shakespeare who was a husbandman at Snitterfield at the same time that the father of the poet was a member of the corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, where he is supposed to have traded as a glover, butcher, and dealer in corn and wool from about the year 1551. He is described as a yeoman in the conveyance of the Snitterfield property to Webbe in 1579. It has been suggested that he had a farm at Snitterfield as well as a business at Stratford. This is not unlikely, for agriculture was then, more commonly than now, carried on in combination with other more or less allied trades by dwellers in towns and villages. As the mere occupation of land at Snitterfield would not have entitled the administrator of Richard Shakespeare's estate to be described as of that parish, he was probably the occupier of a farmstead there. The fact that a Stratford man was not proposed as his surety may appear to indicate that Richard Shakespeare's son was more closely connected with the village than with the borough; but, although the poet's father occupied a substantial position at Stratford at the date of the administration, a desire to be identified with what may have been his native parish, in dealing with a matter solely connected with it, might account for this choice of a Snitterfield resident as his surety, as well as for the description found in the bond. In addition to his Stratford establishment, John Shakespeare may therefore have maintained another at Snitterfield as tenant of a house and a part of the farm occupied by Richard Shakespeare. In an indenture dated May 21st, 1560, some messuages and land at Snitterfield, conveyed by Agnes Arden of Wylmcote, Robert's eldest daughter, to Alexander Webb, are described as in the occupation of Richard Shakespere

¹ Now at the Probate Registry, Worcester.

² *Testamenta Vetusta Wigorniensia*, vol. vi., part i., folio 59a. Probate Registry, Worcester. For a copy of the bond and grant, see Appendix, No. XXXIV.

and others.¹ The following is stated by Halliwell-Phillipps to be the only notice of a John Shakespeare that he has met with in the records of the manor of Snitterfield : "Juratores ibidem presentant quod Johannes Shakespere (xij^d), Margeria Lyncecombe (xij^d), William Rounde (xij^d), non fecerunt sepes suas secundum ordinacionem sibi adjunctam. *Visus Franci Plegii* held at Snitterfield, 1 October 1561."² As there is an entry in the Snitterfield parish register of the burial of one Joanna Shaxpere on January 5th, 1595-6, he thinks it possible that the writer of the Court Roll "may have committed an error in the form of the Christian name;" but this reference to a John Shakespeare of Snitterfield after the date of the administration in February 1560-1 makes it possible that one of that name, who was not the Stratford burgess, was a resident of that parish.

Alexander Webbe of Snitterfield, in his will dated April 15th, 1573, the execution of which was witnessed by Henry Shaxspere, appointed John Shackespere of Stratford one of his overseers, "to see his last will and testament performed."³ In 1581 and 1582 the name of Henry Shagspere of Snitterfield, who is supposed to have been a son of the above-named Richard, appears in the records of the Worcester Consistory Court as the defendant in two tithe cases at the suit of the vicar of Hampton-in-Arden and others.⁴ In 1587 an action was brought in the Stratford Court of Record by one Nicholas Lane for the recovery from John Shakespeare of the sum of £10 which was owing by his brother Henry, and for which John had made himself responsible. "Henry Sakspere, was buryed the xxixth day of December anno 1596," Snitterfield Parish Register.⁵ This Henry is supposed to have been the poet's uncle. I have met with no other evidence connecting John Shakespeare of Stratford with the Snitterfield husbandman, and do not consider that the identity has been completely established.⁶ In the

¹ *Outlines*, ii. 177.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 213.

³ Probate Registry, Worcester. Probate was granted on July 15th, 1573.

⁴ *Act Book* No. 4, Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

⁵ See *Outlines*, ii. 207-13.

⁶ But see Mrs. C. C. Stopes, *Shakespeare's Family*, pp. 35-49, and Mr. W. Salt Brassington, *Shakespeare's Homeland*, pp. 11-5.

year 1556 John Shakespeare purchased two houses in Stratford-upon-Avon. One of them probably forms a part of the "Birthplace" premises in Henley Street, and the other, the exact position of which has not been ascertained, was in Greenhill Street. In or about the year 1557 John Shakespeare married Mary Arden, the youngest daughter and seventh child of Robert Arden of Wilmcote, a hamlet in the parish of Aston Cantlow, about three miles from Stratford-upon-Avon, who by his will dated November 23rd, 1556,¹ bequeathed to her the estate of Asbyes in Wilmcote, consisting of about sixty acres of land, and also the sum of £6 13s. 4d. This family has been regarded as related, through Thomas Arden, also of Wilmcote from 1501 to 1546,² to the Ardens of Park Hall in the parish of Curdworth, near Birmingham. Beyond Thomas Arden, however, the pedigree of the family becomes conjectural, in spite of the many attempts to find for William Shakespeare, the son of the Warwickshire yeoman, a better title to descent from a good stock than his genius. The name of Mary Arden's mother, who was Robert's first wife, is unknown.

John Shakespeare's position at Stratford for some years after his marriage is indicated by his election to various municipal offices in the borough, of which, after entering the corporation as a capital-burgess in or about the year 1557, he served as chamberlain from Michaelmas 1561 to Michaelmas 1563, as High bailiff in 1568-9, and as alderman from 1565 to 1586. In a conveyance dated September 20th, 1575, two houses in Henley Street, owned by William Wedgewood, a tailor, are described as lying "betwyne the tenement of Richard Hornebe [a blacksmith]³ of the east part, and the

¹ Probate Registry, Worcester. For a copy of the will and inventory, see Appendix, No. XXXV.

² G. R. French, *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, pp. 465-72; *Outlines*, ii. 207.

³ "I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news;
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers (which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet),
Told of a many thousand warlike French
That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent."

King John, iv. 2.

tenement of John Shakesper, yeoman, on the weste parte.”¹ John Shakespeare acquired more property in the town in 1575, a part of this purchase being probably the house in Henley Street now known as the Birthplace. Together with the adjoining house, acquired in 1556, it eventually came into the possession of John Hart, whose children sold the premises in 1806 to Thomas Court. After the death of his widow in 1846 the two houses were purchased by the representatives of subscribers to a fund raised for the purpose, and in 1866 they were transferred to the Trust by which they are now held.

In 1578 signs of a change in John Shakespeare's affairs appear in the mortgage of the Asbies property, which was followed by the sale of that at Snitterfield. His name also appears in a list of aldermen the amounts of whose levy for the purchase of arms were in arrear, and he was exempted from the payment of a weekly tax of four pence levied upon the aldermen for the relief of the poor. The nature and extent of the difficulties by which he was beset for some years after that date have been discussed at great length and with much difference of opinion, but interest centres mainly in their influence upon a critical period of his eldest son's early career, particularly between the dates of leaving school and marriage.

Among other causes, John Shakespeare's misfortunes have been attributed to a litigious disposition, to a want of steadfastness which led him to engage in mercantile enterprise of too great a variety, to the decay of local trade, and to religious persecution. Of the first three there are clear indications respectively in the proceedings of the local Court of Record, in the description of his trades at various periods, and in the commercial history of the town, which by 1590 had “fallen into much decay for want of such trade as heretofore they had by clothing and making of yarn, employing and maintaining a number of poor people by the same, which now live in great penury and misery by reason they are not set at work as before they have been.”² The active part taken by Whitgift

¹ *Birthplace Museum Deeds*, No. 15.

² See Dr. Rolfe, *Life*, 1904. A copy of this petition, without date, is in the Birthplace Library. Saunders Collection, No. 240.

against Nonconformists during his occupation of the see of Worcester (1576-1583) caused great anxiety and sometimes hardship to those in his diocese who publicly professed either Roman Catholic or Puritan doctrines, and John Shakespeare is claimed by each of the two sects as a sufferer from Anglican intolerance.¹ Whether all or any of the three first mentioned causes, or whether an undue attention to municipal business inconsistent with the proper conduct of his own affairs, or an inability to retain and make the best of the fruits of his industry contributed to his pecuniary difficulties is not known; but, so far as can be ascertained, no part of his business remained to be shared or continued by any of his sons.

Whatever were John Shakespeare's religious opinions, there can be no doubt that he publicly conformed during the early part of his official career, and there is no proof that this conformity was feigned. He took the usual oaths on being elected to his various public offices, and was a prominent member of the Council when some of the changes resulting from the Reformation were carried out. He was Chamberlain when the Council ordered the proceedings referred to in the following entry in his accounts for the year ending Michaelmas 1563: "Item payd for defasyng ymages in y^e Chappell ij^s." In the accounts for the following year made for the chamberlains by John Shakspeyr and John Tyler, and presented on March 21st, 1565, is entered a payment of two shillings "for takynge doune y^e rood loft in y^e Chapell." John Shakespeare was present as chief-alderman on October 10th, 1571, when an order was made for the sale of certain copes and vestments of which an inventory is given in the report of the proceedings of the council.² His Puritanism has been deduced mainly from an assumed approval of the above proceedings and from the apparent commencement of his financial troubles at about the time of the extension to the Puritans of the persecution previously directed against recusant Catholics.

¹ Revd. T. Carter, *Shakespeare Puritan and Recusant*, p. 32; Revd. H. Sebastian Bowden, *The Religion of Shakespeare*, p. 71; Joseph Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History of the English Catholics*, v. 498.

² Stratford Corporation Records, *Council Book A*.

It is unknown whether John Shakespeare's conformity was in accordance with his real opinions or merely an outward deference imposed by the necessities of his official and commercial position; but the latter hypothesis seems to be accepted by those who assert that he remained true to the old faith. It is pointed out by Dr. Sidney Lee that "The circumstance that he was the first bailiff to encourage actors to visit Stratford is . . . conclusive proof that his religion was not that of the contemporary Puritan, whose hostility to all forms of dramatic representations was one of his most persistent characteristics."¹ Under 1 Eliz. c. 2, John Shakespeare, either as a Catholic or Puritan recusant, would have incurred a fine of twelve pence for non-attendance at church services on Sunday or a Holy-day, and under 23 Eliz. c. 1, a penalty of £20 for every month of entire absence from the services. Committal to prison followed a refusal to pay the fines or to conform. Continued recusancy would therefore have brought complete financial ruin and loss of liberty upon John Shakespeare; but there is no evidence that these penalties were enforced, and there does not appear to have been any reason for making an exception in his case, had they been incurred.² In 1592 he was returned as a recusant who had been "heartofore presented for not comminge monethlie to the Church;" he is, however, included with those of whom "it is said that these last nine coom not to church for fear of process for debtt."³ What is probably the true explanation is thus furnished by the only authentic document now extant bearing upon this part of the subject. Under an order made on September 29th, 1557, penalties were incurred also by "every alderman and capytall burgesse" for non-attendance at the Council meetings. On November 19th, 1578, it was ordered "that every alderman and burgess that hath made default not comminge to this Hall according to the order shall paye their americiament." John Shakespeare was not present

¹ *Life*, pp. 10-1. See also Appendix, No. XXXVI.

² But see *Outlines*, ii. 397, note 396.

³ For further observations upon John Shakespeare's supposed recusancy, see Appendix, No. XXV.

at this meeting, and rarely attended afterwards, yet there is no proof that he paid any of these fines. The frequent proceedings in the Court of Record in which his name occurs appear to have been connected with ordinary business litigation, and there is no proof that the enforcement of any of the above mentioned penalties affected his commercial stability, or that any of his property was mortgaged to evade the consequences of his presumed recusancy.

If money was borrowed upon the security of the houses in Henley Street, redemption must have followed, for they were in his possession in 1596-7, and were ultimately inherited by his eldest son. The suggested possibility that John Shakespeare found it necessary by means of fictitious mortgages to secure his possessions against the fines imposed upon recusants¹ will not account for his difficulties. When he tendered payment of the £40 borrowed upon the security of Asbies, the mortgagee refused to give up the estate on the plea that other sums were due;² and the following appears in a list of debts in the will, dated November 14th, 1578, of Roger Sadelor of Stratford-upon-Avon, baker: "Debtes w^{ch} are owinge unto me . . . Item of Edmonde Lambarte and . . . Cornishe, for the debte of Mr. John Shaksper, v.^{ll}." ³ In a Controlment Roll dated 29 Eliz. (1586) John Shakespeare, who became bail for one Michael Price of Stratford-upon-Avon, tinker, is described as a Glover.⁴ The omission of his trade from the last entry in which his name appears in the register of the local Court of Record, in March 1594-5, has been regarded as an indication that he was not then actively engaged in business. In a bill filed in 1597 for the recovery of the mortgaged property of Asbies, John Shakespeare alleged that John Lambert "ys of greate wealthe and abilitie," and that he and his wife "are of small wealthe, and verey fewe frends and alyance in the said

¹ Revd. T. Carter, *Shakespeare Puritan and Recusant*, pp. 95-108.

² See copy of "Replication," *Outlines*, ii. 16.

³ The will, which was proved January 17th, 1578-9, is at the Principal Registry, Somerset House, No. 1, *Bakon*.

⁴ *Outlines*, ii. 241. See Appendix, No. XLI, for a reference to John Shakespeare as a Glover.

countie" [Warwick].¹ He is described as a Yeoman in the conveyance of the strip of land in Henley Street to George Badger in January 1596-7. Whether John Shakespeare was unfortunate in business or persecuted on account of religious opinions which were objectionable to the authorities, he does not appear to have forfeited the good opinion of his fellow-townsmen, for he was not removed from his position as alderman until 1586, when the reason assigned was that he "dothe not come to the Halles when . . . warned nor hath done of long tyme." Almost up to the end of his life he was employed in business matters in the town and occasionally served as juror in the Court of Record. In 1592 he valued estates for probate or administration purposes, and in 1601 he assisted in the preparation of suggestions for counsel in an action which was brought against the Corporation. In view of the whole of the known circumstances it does not appear to be necessary to question the truth of the statement made in the recusancy return of 1592, or to go beyond it in search of an explanation of John Shakespeare's difficulties. Apart from the desire to claim him as an adherent of one or other of the sects persecuted by the Queen, and so to justify the assumption that his eldest son was at an early age brought under the influence of certain doctrinal teaching, it is doubtful whether the father's misfortunes would have been so persistently attributed to that cause.

In spite of his frequent employment in the preparation of accounts and other matters in which the art of writing appears to have been almost indispensable, his ability to write his own name has been questioned. He frequently signed with a mark, and there is no document which can with certainty be said to have been written by him. It is, however, probable that not only was he expert in the use of counters, then an ordinary method of reckoning, but that some of the Chamberlain's accounts are in his handwriting. The heading of the account for 1566, after the conclusion of his period of service in that office, is as follows: "The Accompt

¹ A copy of the Bill is given in *Outlines*, ii. 14-5.

of William Tylor and William Smythe, chamburlens, made by John Shakspeyr."

John Shakespeare was buried at Stratford-upon-Avon on September 8th, 1601. His circumstances at that time are not known, and, so far as can be ascertained, he made no will or other disposition of his real property or effects, and there is no record at the Worcester Probate Registry of a grant of administration. His eldest son's position, however, justifies the assumption that financial anxieties had ceased to exist long before his death.¹

Much of the litigation in which the poet's father is supposed to have been concerned, and upon which the ideas as to his embarrassed condition are partly based, is considered by some writers to have been connected with the affairs of one John Shakespeare, a shoemaker who resided at Stratford from 1584² until 1594. But this John was elected ale-taster in 1585 and constable in 1586, and it is unlikely that he would have attained either position had he been in difficulties. In the Chamberlain's accounts for 1586 there occurs an entry of the receipt of thirty shillings from "Shakspeare the Shumaker for his freedom the xix. day of January." It has been pointed out by Dr. Sidney Lee that in the year 1592 he was Master of the Shoemakers' Company and probably therefore in a good position.³

William, the eldest son of John Shakespeare, was baptized in the parish church of Stratford-upon-Avon on April 26th, 1564. The date of his birth is not known, but it is popularly supposed to have been April 23rd, and the anniversary is commemorated on the festival of Saint George the Martyr. Beyond the local tradition that Shakespeare was educated at the Grammar School of King Edward the Sixth at Stratford, there is no information as to his school days. The education was free and, for that time, good of its kind, and it is unlikely

¹ For an allusion to John Shakespeare from the Plume MSS., see Appendix, No. XLI.

² Marriage, November 25th, 1584, "John Shakspere and Margery Roberts." Stratford-upon-Avon Parish Register.

³ *Life*, pp. 12-3.

that John Shakespeare neglected to give his eldest son the benefit of it. It is supposed that he was received into the school in his eighth year and remained until he was fourteen; but even if the period was still more limited, the possession of great intelligence and a retentive memory renders it almost certain that he made some progress in Latin, if not in other subjects, before the traditional early withdrawal. The masters at the Grammar School during the time that Shakespeare was probably a scholar there were Walter Roche, B.A., and his successor Simon Hunt, B.A., whose appointment in October 1571 is thus recorded in the register of the Bishop of Worcester, by whom licences to teach in the parishes in his diocese were at that time issued: "xxix die ejusdem mensis &c. anno predicto emanavit licencia Simoni Hunt in artibus bacch. docendi literas instruendi pueros in schola grammaticali in villa de Stratford super Avon."¹ Another licence for teaching in the same town was granted on January 31st, 1581-2, but neither the name of the teacher nor of the school is recorded.² Thomas Hunt is said to have been a master from 1572 to 1577:³ I have not been able to verify this statement. In referring to Ludington, Halliwell-Phillipps says: "Thomas Hunt, who had been one of the masters of the Stratford Grammar School during the poet's boyhood, is noticed as having been its curate in 1584, in which year he was suspended for open contumacy."⁴ Thomas Jenkins is also named as a master "about the year 1577. . . . It appears from a receipt in the possession of Robert Wheler, Esq., that on the 9th July 1579 Thomas Jenkins 'departed from this school' on receiving £6 from John Cottom of London, by whom he was succeeded in the mastership."⁵ Simon Hunt of Stratford-upon-Avon, probably the schoolmaster above mentioned, died in or before the year 1598, and administration of his estate was granted on May 3rd of that year to Thomas Harward of Hewell in the parish of Tardebigg, gentleman.

¹ Register of Bishop Bullingham, folio 5a, Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

² Register of Bishop Whitgift, folio 41b.

³ Revd. T. Carter, *Shakespeare, Puritan and Recusant*, p. 182.

⁴ *Outlines*, ii. 364, note 299.

⁵ *Tercentenary Volume*, Stratford-upon-Avon Grammar School, 1853, p. 37.

Hunt does not appear to have been a householder at the time of his death, as the items in the inventory of his estate consist of two sums of twenty pounds in the hands of Henry Morgan and one of sixty pounds in the hands of William Harwood.¹ One Richard Hunt was cited to appear before the Consistory Court at Worcester on June 14th, 1616, for teaching without licence at Stratford.²

Shakespeare's supposed early withdrawal from school may have been due to a demand for his assistance at home, as recorded by Rowe, or to the necessity that he should earn his own living. Upon this period of his life a dim light is thrown by the traditions of certain avocations in which he is said to have been engaged and of escapades which are alleged to have brought these attempts at usefulness to a close.

Shakespeare's occupation is omitted from the marriage licence bond—an omission not unusual, for, taking fifty of the bonds executed in the years 1582 and 1583 in which the bridegroom is not described as a surety, we find three only in which the information is given. In these cases the terms "clerk" and "gentleman" sufficiently account for the distinction. In the absence of better sources of information as to his youthful employments, it is necessary to consider the reports of the earlier writers who, upon this subject unusually communicative, have left the modern enquirer a choice from such avocations as butcher, schoolmaster, and wool-dealer. Both Aubrey and Rowe agree as to his early initiation into his father's business, though they differ as to the exact nature of it; but in Shakespeare's day the dealing in wool and the slaughtering of animals were so closely allied that this want of agreement may be attributed to natural variations of the same tradition. So far as can be ascertained from these sources, Shakespeare's "father was a butcher and . . . when he was a bey he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a calfe he would doe it in a high style, and

¹ Probate Registry, Worcester.

² *Visitation Book*, Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

make a speech . . . he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country" (*Aubrey*). "He was apprenticed to a butcher and . . . run from his master to London" (*Dowdall*).¹ "His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, could give him no better education than his own employment" (*Rowe*). Whether he was apprenticed to this trade or assisted in it as one of the branches of his father's farming, wool-dealing, or gloving business, there can be little doubt as to Shakespeare's youthful acquaintance with the practical work of the slaughter-house. Halliwell-Phillips says the butchers of Stratford-upon-Avon then "largely represented the wealth and commercial intelligence of the town."²

The period of Shakespeare's service with his father, which, according to Rowe, commenced when he left school, would give but little time, especially if he went to London at the age of eighteen,³ for other employments at Stratford, except perhaps such as offered when John Shakespeare's diminishing business no longer needed his assistance. Whether his efforts to earn a living at Stratford included the experience as a schoolmaster reported by Aubrey remains uncertain. It has been considered possible that "on first leaving Stratford he found some such employment in a neighbouring village."⁴ But Dowdall's report that the poet left Stratford for London "and there was received into the playhouse" is against this supposition. Moreover, if one of the alleged causes of his departure be true, the vicinity of Stratford would not have afforded a safe refuge from such an enemy as the powerful Lucy, whose influence extended far enough to prevent the fugitive from obtaining employment in Warwickshire or, perhaps, in the adjoining counties. At a greater distance from home the natural suspicion attaching to a stranger who could give no good account of himself would, in those days, have made it difficult to obtain a post as teacher. While neither date nor place can be assigned with certainty, it is probable

¹ See remarks on Dowdall's letter, Appendix, No. XXX.

² *Outlines*, i. 58.

³ *Aubrey*.

⁴ Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 29.

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that Shakespeare's employment as a teacher was one of the early attempts to make use of whatever knowledge of Latin or English he had acquired at school.

The supposition that Shakespeare's knowledge of the law was gained by professional experience rests largely upon the assumption that the familiarity shown by frequent and apt use of legal phrases could have been gained in no other way. In commenting upon the belief that the poet had been an attorney's clerk, Dr. Furnivall says: "that he was so at one time of his life, I, as a lawyer, have no doubt. Of the details of no profession does he show such an intimate acquaintance as he does of law."¹

Lord Campbell says: "Great as is the knowledge of law which Shakespeare's writings display, and familiar as he appears to have been with all its forms and proceedings, the whole of this would easily be accounted for if for some years he had occupied a desk in the office of a country attorney in good business,—attending sessions and assizes,—keeping leets and law days, &c.,"² and he mentions five years as the time in which such a knowledge might have been gained. It is not improbable that, among the schemes for his eldest son's future,³ John Shakespeare considered the law a more suitable and lucrative calling than a share in his own business; and the ex-high-bailiff would have had little difficulty in placing his son with one of the attorneys known to have been in practice in Stratford,⁴ of whom Malone gives the names of six in addition to that of Henry Rogers, the Town Clerk.⁵ But at the time when Shakespeare is supposed to have been taken from school his father appears to have been already in difficulties. Ashbie had been mortgaged, and some property at

¹ Introduction to the *Royal Shakespere*, p. vii. See also Malone, *The Life of William Shakespeare*, 1821, p. 108; and Drake, *Shakespeare and His Times*, i. 48.

² *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements Considered*, p. 22.

³ William Shakespeare having no prospect of a University degree to help promotion, the Church in its then crippled state would not have commended itself to John Shakespeare, who knew the condition of many of the country clergy, of which the almost menial position of the vicar of the neighbouring parish of Charlecote furnished an example. See Appendix, No. XXXVII.

⁴ A Court of Record was held there once a fortnight.

⁵ *William Shakespeare*, 1821, pp. 107-8.

Snitterfield was soon afterwards sold, so that any project he may have entertained for his son's advancement, such as a regular professional training, had no doubt been abandoned.

There was hardly sufficient time between the dates of Shakespeare's leaving school and of his departure from Stratford for the apprenticeship considered by Lord Campbell to have been necessary for the attainment of his knowledge of the law; still a shorter period of service in a more humble capacity with some attorney at Stratford-upon-Avon may be added to the possible avocations with which Shakespeare amused himself and vexed his employers before leaving his native town. Moreover, any acquaintance with legal terms and procedure obtained at Stratford may well have been supplemented during his early years in London, where he had ample time to acquire a knowledge of these and other subjects upon which, though in a lesser degree, he was well informed, and to which the argument of practical experience might also be applied. Mr. J. Churton Collins says: "Perhaps the simplest solution of the problem is, to accept the hypothesis that in early life he was in an attorney's office; that he there contracted a love for the law which never left him; that as a young man in London, he continued to study or dabble in it for his amusement, to stroll in leisure hours into the Courts and to frequent the society of lawyers."¹ It has been thought that Nash's allusion to those "who leave the trade of Noverint² whereto they were borne"³ pointed at Shakespeare; but there is some doubt as to who were the subjects of this satire.

It is not unlikely that each of the occupations named by Aubrey, Rowe, and others was tried; there is, however, little to indicate the order of their occurrence or the circumstances in which the changes were made. Aubrey's statement that Shakespeare had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country, as well as the likelihood that his unusual mental capacity had attracted the attention of his tutors and led to his selection as such, is favourable to the hypothesis that he was

¹ *Studies in Shakespeare*, p. 240.

² The Legal Profession.

³ Greene's *Menaphon*, 1589.

employed as a teacher at the Stratford Grammar School¹ before his removal thence to assist his father.² When the business at Henley Street became unremunerative or for some other reason was abandoned by John Shakespeare, an attempt to turn his son's clerly accomplishments to profitable account may have given the youth some experience of the law in an attorney's office. With no special qualifications other than intelligence and a fair education for the above mentioned employments, and but little inclination for them by reason of a dislike to the restraint they imposed, he probably played with all after the manner of the traditional calf-killing, tiring of each as his brain matured and his mind expanded. At last, it would seem, he adopted a calling which enabled him to make a fortune and, incidentally, to develop one side of his genius.

At this period of his life it is not unlikely that much of the energy, ability, and force of character that were afterwards effectively directed to more serious affairs found an outlet in field-sports and made him a leader in the mischief of which traditions are still preserved at Stratford. None of the escapades coupled with his name, such as the poaching exploits, appears to be inconsistent with the little that is known of him. It is not improbable that the wilfulness of youth led him from one adventure to another until some daring feats, of which raiding of Sir Thomas Lucy's game³ is said to have formed part, brought him into conflict with an adversary against whom all his wit and audacity were of no avail.

It is perhaps not well to place too much reliance upon some of the traditions; yet the humiliating experiences mentioned by Davies⁴ may also be true of Shakespeare's youth. In the absence, however, of more convincing evidence than

¹ "Possibly A-B-C-darius or pupil teacher." See Dr. Furnivall's Introduction to the *Royal Shakspeare*, p. vii.

² Rowe.

³ But see Mrs. C. C. Stopea, "Justice Shallow," *Fortnightly Review*, February 1903.

⁴ See p. 74.

has hitherto been brought forward, these and other incidents of a like kind recorded by tradition should be regarded as manifestations of youthful high spirits. They may be associated with the period which came to a close at the time described by Aubrey as "about eighteen" rather than the more mature age founded upon extreme readings of Rowe's account. The longer he remained at Stratford under such conditions the less would become his chances of release from them, and the more restricted the time for that great change in his fortunes which has much enhanced the mystery of his life. The adoption of Aubrey's account would render unnecessary many of the speculations as to a state of affairs created almost entirely by the modern tendency to increase the interval between the marriage and the departure for London.

On the subject of Shakespeare's marriage, tradition gives only the name of the bride and an unsatisfactory reference to her parentage. She was probably a daughter or sister of Richard Hathaway of Shottery, who died in 1581. There is no proof of the performance of the ceremony, which, however, probably followed closely upon the issue of the licence; for the trouble of obtaining it, as well as other attendant circumstances, may be regarded as indicating that one of the parties was anxious that there should be no delay; and there is no evidence that Shakespeare desired to postpone it. If he married before leaving Stratford, the ceremony was probably performed in one of the neighbouring churches in which the registers have not been preserved, and of these the claims of Temple Grafton and Luddington are perhaps stronger than others. If he had already left his home and was travelling with a company of players, the marriage may have been the object of a visit to some convenient place in the old diocese of Worcester agreed upon for the purpose. The possibility of a personal application for the licence at the Worcester Registry lends some support to the hypothesis that the church of Saint Martin in that city was selected. No other information than that given by Rowe throws any light upon the question of Shakespeare's residence at the date of the licence, but it

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appears to be generally taken for granted that he had not then left Stratford, an assumption which neither the peculiar wording of the licence bond nor any other evidence, taken by itself, is sufficiently strong to negative. Stratford and London are the only places at which it is now known that Shakespeare had either a temporary or permanent abode.

There is no improbability in any of the reasons which have been assigned for Shakespeare's departure from Stratford, such as threatened loss of liberty as a result of the Lucy prosecution, a desire to be rid of disagreeable associations, dissatisfaction with the reduced position of his family, his own poverty and poor prospects, the expectation of assistance from friends in London, a preference for the actor's roving life, or the consciousness of powers which, with fitting opportunities, would enable him to realize youthful dreams of wealth and social position. Any of these motives would exercise as powerful an influence at eighteen as at the other ages which have been read into Rowe's statement.

Among other talents Shakespeare seems to have possessed the faculty—not always associated with genius—which makes for success in life. Even at the age of eighteen he may have had sufficient foresight to weigh his chances and to see that in the ordinary course of affairs he had little prospect at Stratford of advancement in trade or the distinction of being the second of his family to occupy the bailiff's chair. There appears to have been little in the condition of his father's affairs at that time to induce Shakespeare to enter upon a similar career, even if the opportunity had presented itself. More than one avocation had probably been tried and abandoned; he was pledged, if not formally contracted, to marry Anne Hathaway; and the prospect of parental responsibilities and the necessity of more adequate means of support than the earnings of an apprentice provided urgent reasons for a change. To such a man the position would become intolerable; and having before him the example of others who had made a fortune in London, it was but natural that he should turn his thoughts in that direction.

The more trustworthy of the traditions and the weight of probability are in favour of the correctness of Aubrey's guess that Shakespeare left for London at "about eighteen"; and the circumstances of his marriage render it exceedingly probable that the departure took place before or soon after the date of the licence, November 27th, 1582. It is thought by some writers that in furtherance of his plans he took advantage of the visit of a company of players to Stratford, a course not unlikely to have been adopted both for concealment, if necessary, and for the protection afforded by association with men accustomed to the vicissitudes and dangers of the road in his days. That convenient opportunities were not wanting is proved by entries in the Corporation accounts. Thus we read: "Payed to Henry Russell for the Earl of Worcester's players v^s." This item appears, without date, in the account for the year ending Michaelmas 1582; but, as it is near the end, the payment may have been made during the summer or autumn of that year. Entries of the same kind appear in the account for the following year: "Payd to Mr. Alderman that he layd downe to y^e lord Bartlite¹ his players and to a preacher v^s"; "Payd to the lord Sandowes² players iij^s iv^d."

Whether Shakespeare had so far transgressed the law as to render himself liable to arrest is uncertain; but in any case no serious attempt to capture him could have been made at the instance of Sir Thomas Lucy. The metropolis would have been an insecure hiding-place, even for one under an assumed name, for Lucy's influence was great. Shakespeare's absence from Stratford therefore probably mitigated any resentment his conduct may have aroused.

The marriage and the departure from Stratford were separated by no long interval; and it is doubtful whether the union was for many years followed by more than a companionship too intermittent to render the matrimonial yoke unduly galling, even to a man of Shakespeare's temperament. The primary necessity for the separation and, after that, the

¹ Berkeley.² Chandos.

exigencies of his calling sufficiently account for frequent and sometimes considerable periods of absence. It is not necessary to adduce such reasons as the domestic unhappiness and alienation which are prominent among the occurrences supposed to have made it inconvenient for him to remain at home, but which do not appear to be based upon anything more tangible than possible disparity in age and certain casual references in his writings. Such a state of affairs, if it had any existence, was less likely to have been caused by early discovered incompatibility than by some of the incidents of the free life with which his profession would soon make him familiar.

It may be that for some time after Shakespeare's arrival in London, perhaps until success had assisted in removing some of the objections to his calling, the prejudices of friends to whom his connection with the stage was not acceptable interfered with the maintenance of family intercourse closer than might be permitted by the travels of his company into Warwickshire or necessitated by a demand for his presence at home. But it is difficult to believe that he was wanting in natural affection or that in quest of pleasure, position, or wealth he for many years deliberately severed all connection with his parents, wife, and children.¹ That his short experience of married life led to complete alienation is equally improbable. If he had no definite plans on arriving in London, he may at first have intended that his wife should join him there; but his adoption of the stage as a profession and the wandering life it entailed were good reasons for leaving her at Stratford, where neither protection nor aid would be wanting.

Little can be gained by discussing the position of Shakespeare's family at a time concerning which all this doubt exists, or by speculating upon the difficulties supposed to have been due to his inability to provide for his wife and children during a non-productive period of his London career. The uncertainty

¹ "He that hath Wife and Children, hath given hostages to Fortune, for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of Vertue or Mischief." Bacon's *Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral: Of Marriage and Single Life*, 1680 edition, p. 23, viii.

respecting both Anne Hathaway's parentage and the circumstances under which the marriage took place make it impossible to form any correct idea as to her position. Whether she was the Agnes named in Richard Hathaway's will, and entitled on her marriage with Shakespeare to the legacy of £6 13s. 4d., or whether she was his sister and had her own portion from their father is not known. But Aubrey's statement that the poet removed to London at about the age of eighteen, as well as the favourable conditions indicated by his rapid advance to prosperity, renders it probable that, at least during the latter part of the time in which he is assumed to have been struggling to support the family at Stratford, he had succeeded as an actor in London and was in a position to maintain in comfort all who were dependent upon him. There is not the slightest reason to hold that he was either unmindful of his duty in this respect or too poor to perform it, despite the popular notions as to his destitute condition for some years after his marriage, and neglect of family obligations during his early years in London.

There is no indication that Shakespeare was accompanied by his wife or was afterwards joined by her. The baptisms of his children at Stratford point to the conclusion that his wife remained there, and there are but few evidences of communication with his family for a period of fifteen years after the date of the marriage licence. Against Rowe's assertion that he remained at Stratford for some time after his marriage may be placed Aubrey's guess, that he left at about the age of eighteen. The births of his children afford some proof of visits at unknown intervals between the summer of 1582 and February 1584-5; the Lambert negotiations point to a communication with his parents in 1587; and tradition says that he visited Stratford once a year. This bare recital is, strangely enough, supposed to give the whole history of Shakespeare's connection with that place from the date of his departure until 1596. It would be as reasonable to assert that he was absent from his son's funeral because no statement of his presence now survives as to assume that his visits to Stratford during the period in question were limited to those which have been so sparingly recorded.

Whether or not mere chance or a preference for the stage finally determined Shakespeare's choice of a profession, it seems probable that his first experience in acting was not gained in London, and that an acquaintance with players during their visits to Stratford gave him opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of the business of the theatre and originated the idea of his becoming an actor. Such an initiation would readily lead to regular employment of the kind when it suited his purpose to seek it. The attempt to gratify a youthful inclination would promise better chances of success at the age of eighteen, through a regular apprenticeship or such other means as were then open to aspirants, than when the lapse of three or four years had made it difficult for him to obtain admission to a company in a position acceptable to himself and the older players.

In Shakespeare's first attempt to earn a livelihood in London, his position and prospects would, for a time at least, depend upon the circumstances under which he left Stratford. If he made the change with the avowed intention of becoming an actor, it is not likely that either his relatives at Stratford or their friends in London encouraged this choice of a then discreditable calling.¹ Among these friends may be named Richard Field, who is referred to in the following entry in the Stationers' register: "x^o die August [1579] Richard ffeylde, sonne of Henry ffeilde of Stratford uppon Aven in the Countye of Warwick Tanner: Hath put himself Apprentis to George Byshop, citizen, and Staconer of London for vij. yeres from Michaelmas next. ij^s vi^d."

"It is agreed yat this Apprentis shall serve y^e first vj yeres of his apprenticeship with y^e said Vautrollier to learne y^e art of printinge, and y^e vijth yere with y^e said G. Bisshop."²

Richard Field became a freeman of the city in 1587, and

¹ See 14 Eliz. c. 5, in which Act "Common players in enterludes" are classed with rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars. By 39 Eliz. c. 4, an exception was made in favour of players "belonginge to any Baron of this Realme, or any other honourable personage of greater degree, to be authorized to play under the hand and Seale of Armes of such Baron or Personage."

² Arber's Transcripts of the Stationers' Registers, ii. 93.

printed Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* in 1593. There were, no doubt, other Stratford men settled in London at that time who might have welcomed Shakespeare on his arrival, if his errand had been other than that of obtaining employment in the theatre. Aid in this direction was more likely to have been afforded by his own acquaintances among the strolling players who had visited Stratford, or perhaps by Richard Hathaway the dramatist,¹ who was probably related to the Shottery family; but Davenant's horse-holding tradition and the "mean employments" recorded by Dr. Johnson do not indicate that Shakespeare received effective assistance from any one on his first introduction to the theatre. While this may have been obtained under more favourable circumstances than those described, the general tenor of the traditions points in the opposite direction. How Shakespeare fared during the obscure period which ended in 1593 is quite unknown, and only the sequel reveals anything of the efforts by which he secured a prominent position on the stage and prepared himself for taking the lead as dramatist.

The older traditions agree as to his early connection with the theatre. Aubrey relates that: "William being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess, about eighteen; and was an actor at one of the playhouses." The Revd. John Ward wrote: "He frequented y^e playes all his younger time." After an account of the departure from Stratford Rowe says: "It is at this time and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance with the playhouse. He was receiv'd into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank." Halliwell-Phillipps has pointed out that "James Burbage, the owner of the Theatre, rented premises close by Smithfield in which he 'usually kept horses at liverye for sundry persons.' . . . He might readily upon this occasion have become acquainted with James Burbage at a time when he was desirous of obtaining

¹ See reference to the grant of a marriage licence to a Richard Hathaway of London a week before the date of that granted to Shakespeare, Appendix, No. XXI.

any kind of situation that presented itself, the tradition leading to the inference that he was engaged by the latter to act in some equestrian capacity."¹

It is probable that from the time of Shakespeare's arrival in London in 1582 his energies were devoted to work of some kind connected with the theatre, however lowly the beginnings may have been. The first authentic report of Shakespeare as an actor appears in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber for March 1594-5, in which is entered the payment of a sum of £20 to William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage, the servants of the Lord Chamberlain, for a performance before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich Palace on St. Stephen's day and Innocents' Day 1594. At an earlier date, when the company was under the patronage of Lord Leicester, Shakespeare was probably a member travelling with it to many towns in the Kingdom.² After several changes, King James I. succeeded Lord Hunsdon as patron of the company of which Shakespeare continued to be a member. The possibility of a visit to Denmark has been suggested by the discovery that English actors visited the town of Elsinore in 1585 and 1586. The names of several of the actors, including Kempe and Poope, are entered in the town records.³ The playhouse at which Shakespeare first found employment is not known; but his earlier appearances were probably made at "The Theatre" in Shoreditch or "The Curtain" in Moorfields, both of which were in existence in the year 1577. The "Rose" at Bankside and houses at Newington Butts and Blackfriars are also mentioned in connection with his plays. The "Globe" theatre, erected by the Burbages in 1598 or 1599 at Bankside, was for some years from that time occupied by Shakespeare's company. In a memorial presented in 1635 to the Lord Chamberlain by Cuthbert Burbage and Winifred Burbage it is stated in reference to this theatre that "to

¹ *Outlines*, i. 83-4.

² See Halliwell-Phillipps, *Visits of Shakespeare's Company of Actors*, 1887.

³ *Notes and Queries*, October 8th, 1904, p. 491. See also F. G. Fleay, *A Chronole History*, p. 92; and F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*, p. 107.

ourselves wee joyned those deserveing men Shakspeare, Hemings, Condell, Phillips and others, partners in the profittes of that they call the House."¹ There is no mention of this share in Shakespeare's will. The Globe was destroyed on June 29th, 1613, having caught fire during a performance of *Henry VIII*.

There are several notices of Shakespeare as actor. Aubrey left it on record that he "did act exceedingly well," and compares him with Ben Jonson who, he adds, "was never a good actor." Rowe says "his admirable wit and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguish'd him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times amongst those of the other players, before some old plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and though I have enquired, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was his own *Hamlet*." In *Kind Hart's Dream*, Chettle describes one of the persons of whom he was writing, probably Shakespeare, as being "Exelent in the quality he professes." We learn from Oldys that he acted old men's parts in his own plays, and he specifies that of Adam in *As You Like It*.² Shakespeare's name is mentioned in the Folio edition of 1623 in a list of "the principal actors in all these playes." His name also appears in the lists of the principal actors who took part in the performance of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* and *The Fall of Sejanus*.³ His playing of "some kingly parts in sport" is alluded to in the *Scourge of Folly*, by John Davies of Hereford, published in 1610.⁴

We know too little about Shakespeare at the date of his departure from Stratford to form any clear idea as to how far he had been prepared by education or experience for the work that led up to the *Venus and Adonis* of 1593, or to decide whether the time allowed by the later dates named for the

¹ Public Record Office. See also *Outlines*, i. 317.

² *A Literary Antiquary*, "Mémoir of William Oldys," 1862 edition, pp. 45-6. See Appendix, No. XXXIX.

³ The former was first acted in 1598 and the latter in 1603.

⁴ Epigram 159, p. 76.

change was sufficient for the completion of his literary training. Due allowance must be made for his possession of gifts which, under any circumstances, would have given him great advantages. But the commencement of a career in London, and the direction of his genius, when he was only eighteen, into the course it was destined to take, would have been productive of widely different results from those attainable after several years of such a life as he is generally reputed to have led subsequent to his marriage. The value of early experience in a wide field of activity, with great facilities for improvements, as against something worse than a waste of time in dissipation and a struggle against adverse circumstances at Stratford, cannot be over-estimated.

Conjectural dates from 1582 to 1590 are assigned to Shakespeare's earliest work in the poems and plays; but *Venus and Adonis* was not printed and *Titus Andronicus* does not appear to have been produced on the stage until Shakespeare was in his thirtieth year. Some earlier signs of skill might reasonably be looked for in the case of the genius of whom Aubrey said "he came to London I guesse about eighteen. . . . he began early to make essays in dramatique poetry." Evidence of a more trustworthy kind upon this point is to be desired, still it is the best available, and there is no reason to doubt it. The envy of a less fortunate author¹ and the patronage of Lord Southampton—the first recorded signs of success—may have been but tardy recognitions of Shakespeare's eminence as playwright and poet; for his dramas must have become popular before Greene's jealousy was excited; and the printing of his first known work gives no clue to the date of its composition. Among other causes, this long silence may have been due to the means which he had chosen or had been forced by circumstances to adopt for the exercise of his powers. His first corrected or original plays doubtless enjoyed but a fleeting popularity and, having served their immediate purpose, escaped publication and were soon lost. The earlier poetical exercises, penned in such leisure as he cared to devote to a then

¹ Greene, *Groatnorth of Wil.*

unprofitable employment, may have commanded little attention beyond his own immediate circle, being lightly prized by their writer until their value as a means of securing an influential patron occurred to his practical mind. Such aid in forwarding schemes of financial and social advancement was not beneath his acceptance even at the price of the usual servile dedication. Delay may have been due to the want of such an education as had been gained by Christopher Marlowe, whose case may be cited by way of comparison. He was born in the same year as Shakespeare, and the first part of his *Tamburlaine* was produced in a London theatre in or before the year 1587, one of the dates named for Shakespeare's departure from Stratford. But Marlowe won a scholarship from the King's Grammar School at Canterbury, where he was educated, and he took his B.A. degree in 1583 at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.¹ His earlier achievement may therefore have been due to the fact that the elder Marlowe was more successful as a shoemaker than was John Shakespeare in his commercial ventures, and was consequently in a position to give his son advantages which were denied to the greater genius—one who is said to have left school early and to have been for many years compelled to maintain himself by occupations not always favourable to literary progress. By some writers he is considered fortunate to have escaped the discipline of a university training. Yet his great natural powers would soon have enabled him to throw off academic trammels. However much the absence of such advantages may have impeded his initial progress, it must have imposed fewer disabilities as time advanced.

Leaving to commentators who have made them their special subjects the much debated questions as to how far his genius dispensed with external aids, what was the extent of the learning displayed in his writings, and how correctly to interpret Ben Jonson's "small Latine and lesse Greek," we may safely assume that Shakespeare enjoyed such opportunities as were afforded by one of the best provincial grammar-schools of his day, and that before he reached the

¹ He was killed in a brawl in 1593.

age of nineteen he had made considerable progress in all that his tutors, or the few books to which he had access, or experience of life in a country town could teach him. He had also gained that intimate knowledge of nature which contributed to the charm of his work, and his genius must already have begun to manifest itself. These probabilities are too great to admit of the opposite assumption that the man who had made his mark as a poet and dramatist in 1593 was, at whatever date he arrived in London, the uneducated rustic he is sometimes depicted. If Aubrey's account be accepted, there is little occasion for the surprise often expressed at the supposed rapid development of the Stratford apprentice into the author of *Venus and Adonis* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. In these circumstances, and with the necessary stimulus, Shakespeare's genius would account for the quality of his verse in 1593.

Although he had probably made some progress before he left Stratford, much of his skill and of his knowledge of life must have been gained between that date and 1593, when he had attained a high standard of excellence in poetic and dramatic composition. There is good reason for the belief that these powers of expression had been acquired at a much earlier date; and here may be seen the importance of such advantages as he would derive from the earlier arrival in London, the greater receptivity of mind, and the more ample time and opportunities allowed by Aubrey's date. By thus extending the period of his literary apprenticeship, nothing is taken from the merit of the fine workmanship of which he proved himself capable in his command of language and purity of style. The reasons advanced for an earlier date than 1593 for the composition of this poem, of some of the *Sonnets*, and of at least one play indicate the possibility that they were written in the later years named for the departure from Stratford. Some of these reasons and a table of supposed dates are given in the Appendix, No. XXXIII.

Tradition justifies the belief that Shakespeare settled in London in or about the year 1582 and that he soon afterwards obtained employment on the stage. Access to the

society of dramatic writers and their patrons would not long be withheld from a man possessing his attractive gifts and friendly disposition, eager to make the best use of every opportunity that presented itself and of any encouragement or assistance received from friends both in his own and higher ranks. Mr. J. Churton Collins says: "During his life in London he was surrounded with scholars, being on intimate terms with one of the profoundest of them, Ben Jonson. He breathed, indeed, in an atmosphere of learning."¹ Such favourable conditions render it a matter for surprise that no poem or play from Shakespeare's pen secured permanent record until 1593.

His energies having early been turned to dramatic composition, a new source of profit was added to his earnings as an actor, and with it came the temptation to devote his great powers almost wholly to the requirements of the company with which he was associated. His commanding position in the world of letters was probably attained with far less effort than was needed to secure the higher emoluments of the stage. We may surmise that he was to some extent heedless of the great importance of his literary work, valuing it only as a means of promoting his social and financial aims.

With the publication of Shakespeare's first poem commences that part of his life, extending over a period of twenty-three years, with which we are most familiar. Details of the history of this period become more numerous, and they provide comparatively few subjects for controversy. There are, however, many blank pages in the record and wide differences of opinion on a variety of matters, including the dates of composition of the plays and poems, the mystery of the Sonnets, and the date of his retirement from the stage. For information upon these and other matters properly belonging to the department of literary and æsthetic criticism, and therefore beyond the scope of this work, the reader is referred to the authors who have ably, if not always conclusively, dealt with them. Among the many valuable contributions which may be

¹ *Studies in Shakespeare*, 1904, p. 366.

studied, it may not be invidious to mention the *Lives* by Steevens, Malone, Halliwell-Phillipps, Dr. Furnivall, and Dr. Sidney Lee, and the various commentaries on the poet and his writings by Professor Dowden, Mrs. C. C. Stopes, Professor Gervinus, Mr. F. G. Fleay, and Mr. Churton Collins.

Signs of improvement in Shakespeare's fortunes are not long delayed after the first evidences of his success as a dramatist and poet. In or before the year 1596 his father applied for a coat of arms. The draft grant in Heralds' College contains references to ancestors who had been rewarded by King Henry VII., but this claim is not supported by any known proof, and the name and status of the applicant's father are not even given. In the next year an unsuccessful and probably final attempt was made to regain possession of the Asbies property. John Shakespeare was then advancing in years and, notwithstanding his alleged possession of "lands and tenements of good wealth and substance 500^l," as cited in memoranda on the draft grant of arms of 1596, was a not very prosperous yeoman, who in the following year described himself as "of small wealthe and verey fewe frendes and alyance in the saide countie [of Warwick]." ¹ It may therefore be assumed that both of these proceedings were instigated and financed by his ambitious son with a view to restoring the prestige of the family. The purchase of New Place in 1597 is a further indication that Shakespeare was then in the possession of ample means. Dr. Sidney Lee estimates that "over £130 (equal to £1040 of to-day) would be Shakespeare's average annual revenue before 1599." ²

Whether Shakespeare or his family commenced to reside at New Place soon after his purchase of the property in May 1597 is uncertain. Thomas Greene, the town-clerk of Stratford, wrote in his diary, with reference to a contemplated change of residence, "the rather that I perceyved I might stay another year at New Place." The date of this memorandum is September 9th, 1609, and it is probable that Greene had for some

¹ For an explanation of this plea, see *Outlines*, ii. 390, note 368.

² *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 199.

time been living there with Shakespeare's family or had been sole tenant until that date. He was then about to remove to his house on the bank of the river Avon, near the northern entrance to the churchyard. In referring to this house Halliwell-Phillipps says that Greene was certainly residing there before June 21st, 1611.¹ The additional year at New Place mentioned by Greene may point to a continuation of Shakespeare's residence in London after an intended retirement from the stage in 1609.

In Langbaine's "Lives and Characters of the English Dramatic Poets" is the following reference to Shakespeare: "I have been told that he writ the scene of the Ghost in Hamlet at his house which bordered on the Charnel House and Churchyard."² It is possible that this means a residence in Greene's house long before the purchase of New Place. No light is thrown upon the subject by the return of corn owned by Shakespeare in February 1597-8 in Chapel Street Ward, which included New Place. Wheler relates that the Charnel House was demolished in 1801.³ The house formerly owned by Greene probably stood on the site of one which was taken down about the year 1866 by the late Mr. Charles Flower, who built his residence, now called "Avon Bank," a few yards to the north of it.

No definite information as to Shakespeare's London residences has been obtained. Malone says: "From a paper now before me, which formerly belonged to Edward Alleyn the player, our poet appears to have lived in Southwark, near the Bear Garden, in 1596."⁴ In or about the year 1598, a William Shakspeare was assessed in the sum of 13^s 4^d upon a value of £5 in the parish of St. Helen, Bishopsgate.⁵ In a letter to

¹ *Outlines*, i. 226, ii. 377-8. See also W. Salt Brunnington, *Shakespeare's Homeland*, pp. 73-5.

² Gerard Langbaine the younger (1656-1692). The first edition of *The Lives* was published in 1691.

³ *History and Antiquities of Stratford-on-Avon*, p. 72.

⁴ *Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Papers*, 1796, p. 215. See Dr. Furnivall, Introduction to the *Royal Shakspeare*, p. cxvii.: "This paper having disappeared, etc."

⁵ Lay Subsidy Roll, Public Record Office.

the *Athenæum*, March 26th, 1904, p. 401, Professor J. W. Hales calls attention to the fact that "on membrane Residuum Sussex in the margin of the Roll 41 Eliz. where the name William Shakespeare occurs in the margin in a cursive contemporary hand, are the words 'Episcopo Wintonensi,' and the obvious interpretation is that the person concerned was then living in the Clink in the Bishop of Winchester's liberty—where the sheriff's writ would not run, and so it was necessary to refer the matter to the bishop." After quoting Malone and other authorities he proceeds, "can there be any reasonable doubt that the William Shakspeare mentioned was the great dramatist, and that he lived for a time in or near Bishopsgate and then for some years at Bankside."

In the conveyance from William and John Combe in 1602 and in the precepts of the Addenbrooke suit in 1609 Shakespeare is described as of Stratford-upon-Avon, Gentleman. The last of his plays was not produced until 1611 or 1612, and he purchased a house in Blackfriars in March 1612-13, so that, although for some years before that date much of his time was probably spent at Stratford, his business interests in London were of sufficient importance to require frequent visits until a short time before his death.

The letters written by Shakespeare are as completely lost as the manuscripts of his works; and with the exception of the dedications of his first two poems to Lord Southampton, nothing from his pen in the nature of an epistle is known to be in existence. The one communication addressed to Shakespeare now extant relates to a loan required by Richard Quiney, of Stratford-upon-Avon, the father of the dramatist's future son-in-law:—

"Loveinge Contreyman I am bolde of yo^w as of a ffrende, craveinge yo^w helpe w^h xxx^{li} vppon m^r Bushells & my securytee or m^r myttons w^h me m^r Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate & I have especiall cawse, yo^w shall ffrende me muche in helpeinge me out of all the debettes I owe in London I thancke god & muche quiet my mynde w^h wolde nott be

indebeted I am nowe towards the Cowrte in hope of answer for the dispatche of my Buysenes yo^w shall nether loase creddytt nor monney by me the Lorde wyllinge & nowe butt perswade yo^w selfe soe as I hope & yo^w shall nott need to feare butt w^h all hartie thanckefullenes I wyll holde my tyme & content yo^w ffrende & yf we Bargaine farther yo^w shalbe the paie m^r yo^w selfe, my tyme biddes me hasten to an ende & soe I committ thys [to] yo^w care & hope of yo^w helpe I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. haste the Lorde be w^h yo^w & w^h vs all amen /
ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane the 25 october 1598 /.

yo^w in all kyndenes

Ryc. Quynney"

(Addressed)

"To my Loveinge good ffrend
& contreymann m^r w^m
Shackespere dlr thees /."



(The original is in the Birthplace Library.)

Other references to Shakespeare's business affairs may be seen in a correspondence between certain of his Stratford friends in the years 1597 and 1598, and in proceedings for the recovery of debts in the local Court of Record. The diary of Thomas Greene¹ contains entries relating to a matter of some importance to the town and to Shakespeare, in which their interests do not seem to have been identical:—

"Jovis, 17 No.:, [1614] my Cosen Shakspeare commyng yesterday to towne I went to see him how he did, he told me that they assured him they ment to inclose noe further then to gospell bushe & so upp straight (leavyng out part of the dyngles to the ffield) to the gate in Clopton hedge & take in Salisburys peece: and that they meane in Aprill to servey the Land & then to gyve satisfaccion & not before & he & Mr. Hall say they think there will be nothyng done at all.

¹ Stratford Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, Vol. 13, No. 26a-29.

"23 Dec. [1614] A. Hall.¹ L[ett]res wrytten one to Mr. Manneryng another to Mr. Shakspeare with almost all the com[panyes] handes to eyther: I alsoe wrytte of myself to my Cosen Shakspeare the Coppyes of all our oathes mde [?] then alsoe a not of the Inconvenyences wold g[row] by the Inclosure.

"On Wednesday being the xjth day [Jan: 1614-15].

"At night Mr. Replingham² supped w[ith] me & M. W. Barnes was to beare him Company where he assured me before Mr. Barnes that I should be well dealt w[ith]thall confessyng former promisses by himself Mr. Manneryng & his agreement for me w[ith]th my Cosen Shakspeare:

1615

14 Aug Mr. Barker dyed. Sept W Shakspeares tellyng J Greene that I was not able to beare the encloseinge of Welcombe."

The last paragraph has been held to mean that Shakespeare was averse to the enclosure of a part of the common-fields at Welcombe near Stratford-upon-Avon which had been promoted by William Combe; but a literal, and no doubt the correct reading of the entry is that it records Thomas Greene's objection to the proposed change. The previous paragraphs show that Shakespeare's rights had been considered, and his interests protected against any damage likely to be caused by the proposed enclosure, which, however, met with successful opposition.³

Until the approach of the closing scenes the remaining incidents of Shakespeare's life need no comment, and they are briefly related in the next chapter.

The process of Shakespeare's retirement from active work connected with the stage and the transfer of his attention to home and other interests at Stratford-upon-Avon were probably

¹ A meeting of the Council. Thomas Greene was Town Clerk.

² Replingham was agent for William Combe, one of the promoters of the Welcombe enclosure. See *Outlines*, ii. 394, note 388.

³ See *Outlines*, i. 246-9.

gradual. We may assume also that they were in part due to the necessity for a personal oversight of his estates, an increasing physical unfitness to continue the arduous duties of his calling as an actor, and an inability to enjoy the exhausting pleasures of the life associated therewith. It must have been some weightier motive than content with the fortune he had accumulated or the mere desire for a peaceful life at Stratford that caused the successful author and actor to abandon in his prime the occupations and pleasures which for more than twenty-five years had filled his life. The philosophy and insight he could aptly apply to persons and situations created by his imagination may, in this instance, have been utilized in arriving at a decision. He continued his work as an actor long after other sources of income had become available. Although many of its associations must have become distasteful, dislike for his work on the stage does not alone furnish an adequate motive for the surrender, at a comparatively early age, of the position he had won by his industry and talents and of the society of those by whom he was held in regard. Shakespeare's constitution had perhaps not escaped damage from hardships suffered during his early employment as a strolling player, for which he may have been somewhat unfitted by inherited constitutional weakness¹ or by a gentler nurture than usually fell to the lot of those who followed the actor's calling.

In Shakespeare's will, which was written before January 25th, 1615-6,² he is declared to have been "in perfect health and memory, God be prayed;" but, although these words are not included among the erasures which appear in the document, their correctness as applying to his condition on March 25th may be questioned. Halliwell-Phillipps says: "It appears from the date given to the superscription and from some of the erasures in the manuscript itself, that it was a corrected draft ready for an engrossment that was to have been signed by the testator on Thursday the twenty-fifth of that month,"³ and further:

¹ See J. F. Nisbet, *The Insanity of Genius*, pp. 147-56.

² For a copy of the will, see Appendix, No. XXXVIII.

³ *Outlines*, I. 252.

"If it be assumed that the poet, on or about the eighteenth of January, gave written or oral instructions for his will, making arrangements at the same time for its execution. . . . and that, in the interval, circumstances induced him to postpone the appointment, all the apparently conflicting evidences will be reconciled."¹ I do not think that this fully explains the altered date and other erasures and interlineations, or that there is any reason to suppose that a fair copy of the draft was not signed by Shakespeare on January 25th. It is unlikely that he would have delayed such an important matter for two months or that the date would have been inserted until the execution had actually been completed. It is therefore probable that a will was duly signed on January 25th and that on March 25th the testator's desire to alter some of his former dispositions was communicated to his lawyer, together with an intimation that expedition was necessary. The execution of what I take to be the draft of the January will, altered to meet Shakespeare's wishes, nearly three weeks before his death, points to the conclusion that some crisis in a disease from which he had been suffering rendered that course necessary. The fact that it was proved as his last will suggests the further probability that there was no other opportunity to obtain his signature to a fair copy. It has been suggested that the word "January" was inserted in error. If this hypothesis be accepted no other explanation is requisite, since it would account both for the regnal year being given as the 14th James I.² and for the fact that the day was not altered as well as the month. But the insertion of January for March is an error not so likely to have been made as that in the regnal year, and, moreover, the first interlineation in the will—"in discharge of her marriage portion," following a bequest to Shakespeare's daughter Judith, points to the conclusion that the marriage had not taken place when the draft was prepared.

No necessity for haste is known to have existed in connection with the marriage of Judith Shakespeare to Thomas

¹ *Outlines*, ii. 391, note 374.

² January 25th, 1615-6, was in the thirteenth year of James I.

Quiney, which took place at Stratford on February 10th, 1615-6. An entry in the Visitation Book of the Worcester Consistory Court records the citation of Quiney and his wife for marrying without licence; but other arrangements for the wedding must have been made, for, had the banns not been published, that additional breach of the law would have formed part of the charge for which the newly married couple were cited to appear before the court.¹ A short interval between two prohibited seasons, from January 13th to 28th, had therefore been allowed to pass without taking advantage of the opportunity of marrying after the publication of banns.²

The reason for this neglect after the banns had been duly published may have been of little importance; but the marriage without licence on February 10th is suggestive of haste and requires explanation. It seems to be possible that the marriage may at first have been delayed by the oncoming of Shakespeare's illness, perhaps in the short time between the date of the preparation of the draft will, when he is stated to have been in perfect health, and January 28th, the end of the period during which marriages could be solemnized without licence. The marriage ceremony on February 10th may have been performed in compliance with his wish, or on the appearance of some change, adverse or otherwise, in his condition, such consequences as excommunication for marrying without licence during a prohibited season being disregarded in the emergency.

It is difficult on any grounds other than the above to account for the haste indicated by this marriage; for the parties were of full age, and there was evidently no legal objection. The expense of a licence in those days of prosperity—very different from the state of affairs in 1582—could not have entered into consideration; there could have been no difficulty about sureties to the necessary bond; and no more than two days, perhaps less, would have been occupied in

¹ In May 1616 Walter Wright of Stratford-upon-Avon was cited for marrying without banns or licence. Visitation Book, Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

² See p. 67, and Appendix, No. XXVIII.

obtaining a licence. From a review of the whole of these circumstances it would appear probable that Shakespeare's last illness was more protracted than it is usually believed to have been by those who take the assurance of "perfect health" to refer to the testator's condition on March 25th. Fluctuations in a long illness would account for the state of affairs suggested by the citation of Quiney and his wife as well as by the peculiarities of the will. It is, of course, conceivable that the marriage ceremony was postponed for some other reason than Shakespeare's illness and that the execution of the will was delayed by the postponement of the marriage. This could, however, hardly have been the case, for after the ceremony nearly six weeks elapsed before the will was signed.

The case-book kept by Shakespeare's son-in-law, John Hall, the physician,¹ contains no reference to the illness, and the only mention of the cause of death is found in Ward's diary: "Shakespeare, Drayton and Ben Jonson had a merrie meeting and itt seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a feavour there contracted." That a meeting of the three friends took place at Stratford is not improbable, and excessive conviviality was quite characteristic of such an occasion. It need not be questioned that fever was the primary cause of Shakespeare's death; but the ignorance then existing as to the origin of such diseases may account for Ward's ascription of it to the effects of a carouse, instead of the insanitary conditions with which our forefathers seem to have been content.

Shakespeare died on April 23rd, 1616, and was buried on the 26th in the chancel of the parish church of Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon. Affixed to the north wall immediately above his grave is the monument, the bust in which is supposed to have been executed by Gerard Johnson in or before the year 1623. This differs in some important particulars from the representation of it in Dugdale's *History of Warwickshire*, published in 1656, but probably engraved twenty years earlier.²

¹ *Observations on English bodies, first written in Latine by Mr. John Hall.* Translated by James Cooke and published in 1657.

² Mrs. C. C. Stopes, "The True Story of the Stratford Bust," *The Monthly Review*, April 1904.

With Shakespeare's death the male line in direct descent from John Shakespeare probably became extinct, the only son about whom there is any doubt being Gilbert, the youngest of the family. The burial of a Gilbert Shakespeare on February 3rd, 1612-3, is recorded in the Stratford parish register, but the word "adolescens" is added to the entry. Halliwell-Phillipps says: "In the Coram Rege Rolls, 1597, Gilbert Shackspere, who appears as one of the bail in the amount of £19 for a clockmaker of Stratford, is described as a haberdasher of the parish of St. Bridget; but as his name does not occur in the subsidy-lists of the period, it is not unlikely that he was either a partner with, or assistant to, some other tradesman of the same occupation."¹ In the absence of his brother William he received on his behalf the conveyance of the land purchased from the Combes in 1602. His name appears on a lease, granted on March 5th, 1609-10, by "Margery Lorde, widow, to Richard Smyth alias Courte butcher."² Gilbert is not named in his brother's will, so probably did not survive him. In a note by Oldys it is related that one of Shakespeare's brothers, who had lived until after the Restoration, "would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother Will, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays."³ This is supposed with little probability to refer to Gilbert Shakespeare, whose age at the Restoration would have been ninety-four.

Anne Shakespeare died in 1623, her son-in-law John Hall, the physician, in 1635, and her daughter Susanna Hall in 1649: they are buried in the chancel of Stratford church. The burials of Shakespeare's father, mother, and son, who all predeceased him, are recorded in the Stratford parish register, but their graves are not now marked by stones or any other means of identification. Shakespeare's daughter Judith Quiney died in 1662, having survived her husband⁴ and three children.

¹ *Outlines*, ii. 298, note 121.

² The lease is in the Birthplace Museum.

³ *A Literary Antiquary*. For a copy of the note, see Appendix, No. XXXIX.

⁴ The date of Thomas Quiney's death is unknown.

His grand-daughter Elizabeth, who was the last of his descendants, married her second husband John Barnard in 1649, and died at Abingdon in February 1669-70. The family descent from John Shakespeare was continued through his daughter Joan Hart, who died in 1646; and members of this family have been traced down to the nineteenth century.¹

The lapse of time which is enabling us to recognize more clearly the greatness of Shakespeare's intellect has deprived us of the opportunity of gaining that knowledge of his life which would permit the formation of a true estimate of his personal character. The adverse views founded upon erroneous ideas as to the necessity for the licence and as to years of dissipation at Stratford after his marriage give way to more favourable impressions, if one may accept the new interpretation of the licence documents advocated in these pages and the substitution of Aubrey's account of the departure from Stratford for that given by Rowe. Anne Shakespeare shares in whatever vindication is afforded by the more favourable reading of the whole of the evidence. In spite of all that has been said as to the absence of proof of a precontract, no valid reason has yet been brought forward to show why the usual custom should have been or was departed from in the case of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway. If they were legally contracted, the Ecclesiastical Court could have been relied upon to see that Shakespeare did not evade his responsibility. If there was no contract, he married her without legal obligation; and these unavoidable conclusions should be put to their credit. The construction usually placed upon the delayed completion of the marriage will also be regarded as without justification by all who recognize the former existence of ideas of right and wrong different from those that constitute the present standard, perceiving that codes of morals are subject to the laws of evolution.

For a much needed confirmation of the statements which have been made with reference to the matters under review, Shakespeare's plays are sometimes appealed to, and there are

¹ G. R. French, *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, pp. 397-409.

opinions of great weight that some of the *Sonnets* have a personal application. Authorities, however, are much at variance as to the value of his writings in this respect. Although his comparatively few personal experiences were no doubt as freely employed as were other incidents recorded in his memory and interpreted by a profound knowledge of human nature, no satisfactory inference can be drawn from any similarity between the subject of some particular passage in his writings and a traditional or an imaginary occurrence in his own career,¹ as, for instance, the hazardous conclusion that Prospero's advice to Ferdinand² was inspired by a reminiscence of one of the poet's own indiscretions. Mr. Leslie Stephen says: "It is Orsino, not his creator, who holds that wives should be younger than their husbands, and Shakespeare may not have been thinking of Anne Hathaway."³ In the plays there are several references to contracts of marriage, which on similar grounds might be cited as proof that Shakespeare had been one of the principals in such a ceremony. Now although there is very little doubt that he was contracted to Anne Hathaway, these passages are not the kind of evidence upon which that assumption could properly be based. Neither the poems nor the plays can therefore be relied upon in the attempt to identify incidents in which the poet himself played a part or to arrive at a correct estimate of his character. Even those passages which are regarded as actual confessions⁴ and appear to confirm opinions based on other evidence may tempt the biographer to set up a fictitious personality, a danger to which the widely different conceptions of Shakespeare evolved from the same sources bear witness. To judge from the little we really know about Shakespeare, the passages which are usually pointed out as containing self-revelations are those which are the least likely to have been written by such a man, especially with the

¹ See p. 101. John Shakespeare's neighbours in Henley Street.

² *The Tempest*, iv. i. "If thou dost break." Other passages considered to have a like significance and frequently quoted are given in the Appendix, No. III.

³ *Studies of a Biographer*, p. 5.

⁴ See Samuel Butler, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered*, p. 119; G. G. Gervinus, *Shakespeare Commentaries*, p. 83.

knowledge that they would be made public. Take, for instance, the complaint concerning the rival poet and the mistress in whose favour his friend had supplanted him. It probably never occurred to the "jovial actor and manager"¹ that there would be any curiosity, beyond his own time at any rate, about his history, his opinions, the development of his genius, or his methods of work. And it does not appear to be characteristic of this shrewd and capable man, who made a fortune in spite of some early disadvantages, that he would have cared to satisfy inquisitiveness as to his personal affairs. In no circumstances was he likely to have been tempted to reveal his inmost thoughts in the form of the fashionable sonnet for the entertainment of his literary acquaintances or of posterity.

However much we may desire that Shakespeare should be made to speak for himself in these matters, the motive for thus providing material for his own biography, in confessing to some of the greatest defects that have been attributed to him, seems to be entirely wanting. The belief that Shakespeare suffered years of domestic misery through marrying a woman eight years older than himself is based upon the application to his case of a general principle as to the results of a disparity in age. Beyond the allusions supposed to have been purposely inserted in his writings, there is no indication that he played a part in such a tragedy. It might be deduced from the same source, and particularly from passages in *Venus and Adonis* and the *Sonnets*, that there are revelations of a side of his character which would disentitle him to the sympathy usually extended to the sufferer in an ill-assorted marriage. But from this point of view we know little of Shakespeare as a youth, and not much more after his arrival at man's estate. We can only draw inferences, at great risk of error, as to the probable result of his being thrown, at the age of eighteen, into the company of the patrons and frequenters of the theatres, and the actors and the dramatists who wrote for them, many notorious for their profligacy, who must for years have been his intimate friends and associates.

¹ Emerson.

Two extant traditions bearing on the subject, being ill authenticated, are of little biographical value, except perhaps as reflections of contemporary tavern gossip. One of these, recounting the joke played upon his fellow-actor, Burbage—the only anecdote now known to have been related of Shakespeare in his lifetime—was considered by Manningham to be worthy of record in his diary.¹ The second, the Davenant scandal, may be regarded as the revival of an ancient jest, which, with a change in the names of persons and places, served to amuse successive generations. It was perhaps connected with Shakespeare's name by the wits of his day upon a report that he was William Davenant's godfather and during his visits to Oxford had a preference for the comfort and jovial company to be found at the Crown Tavern.² Sir William Davenant's boast, contemptible enough if he meant blood-relationship, that he was Shakespeare's son, has also given some colour to the story.³ The particular reasons given for the supposed discords of Shakespeare's married life are insufficient. In the absence of clearer evidence of offence on his part or on that of his wife it would be unfair to both to take the assumed facts for granted or to place much reliance upon the inferences drawn from them.

There seems little doubt that Shakespeare barred his wife's dower as far as he could;⁴ but, as has been suggested by Halliwell-Phillipps,⁵ the state of her health may have rendered it necessary that she should be relieved from the care of the management of property. The apparent insignificance of the only bequest made by Shakespeare to his wife and its interlineation in the will, as if an afterthought, are open to comment; but the explanation that in his lifetime full provision had been made for her comfort will commend itself as open to no objection which can be based upon our knowledge of the facts. It is difficult to believe that the bequest of the

¹ *Diary of John Manningham*, Edited by John Bruce for the Camden Society, p. 39.

² Formerly 8 Cornmarket Street, near Carfax. Sidney Lee, *Life*, p. 31.

³ See Appendix, No. I. Also *Outlines*, i. 215-8.

⁴ Sidney Lee, *Life*, p. 274.

⁵ See a letter from Halliwell-Phillipps to Karl Elze in *Shakespeareana* (New York), vii. 17-8.

"second best bed" was intended for a slight, as is sometimes asserted. Even if feelings of dislike had been rankling in his mind, it is questionable whether he would have adopted such a contemptible method of expressing them. The only tradition which indicates Anne Shakespeare's opinion of or regard for her husband is that she "greatly desired to be buried with him."¹ That she played with some discretion her difficult part in a life-partnership with a man of genius is indicated by the probability that if she had been Katherine's² prototype her name would have figured more prominently in the traditions preserved at Stratford. Her interpretation of the references in her husband's works which their relationship is supposed to have inspired could not have been that of some modern commentators. A woman of a shrewish or jealous temper, a fault to which their supposed estrangement has been attributed, would not have remained content in the Stratford home while her husband enjoyed life under conditions little calculated to assure her of his fidelity.

There is nothing in Shakespeare's writings to support the contention that his early religious training had made him either a Roman Catholic or a Puritan, and no trustworthy information has been obtained from any other source. The allusion to his faith in the prefatory sentences of his will, which were those in common use after the Reformation,³ could have been consistently used by Puritan or Prelatist. The Revd. Richard Davies, a minister of the Church of England, who wrote before the year 1708, made the definite statement that Shakespeare "dyed a Papist." This is unsupported by any evidence now available; but it may have been based upon some local tradition of a death-bed act or request prompted by such a re-awakening of early impressions as sometimes precedes dissolution. Absolutely nothing is known as to how much or what part of the religion taught him in the Henley Street home was retained or professed in after

¹ Dowdall. See Appendix, No. XXX.

² *The Taming of the Shrew*.

³ Compare with the exordium of the will of Robert Arden, Appendix, No. XXXV.

years. He appears to have held himself aloof from the religious intrigues and dissensions of his day, his broad mental outlook disposing him to give little heed to matters of doctrine and to regard the contending sects with good-natured tolerance. His familiarity with the language of the English Bible has been used as an argument against a Roman Catholic training; but no book to which he had access would have long remained closed to him.

In the conduct of the practical affairs of life he seems to have subordinated his genius to the attainment of objects among which the making of a great name in literature formed an insignificant part, although the publication of poems in his own name shows that he was not insensible to the fame they might bring. His supposed indifference to the fate of his plays and neglect of his financial interest in them appears to be inconsistent with his business habits. If, as is probable, the plays became the property of his company, his own share must have been disposed of before his death, for it is not mentioned in the will. That the plays, apart from their stage use, were even then of value is evident from the eagerness with which unauthorized publication was made in his lifetime; and it is strange that his influence as a prominent member of the company was not exercised more effectively to prevent this under the laws then in force, as in the case of some of the plays entered in the registers of the Stationers' Company. Intentions which, if carried out, would have given us more perfect examples of his workmanship may have been frustrated by his premature death.

Some of his traits, both real and imaginary, are considered to be out of character with his intellectual greatness, and much has been made of his appearance in the Stratford Court of Record in the character of suitor; but poets are not usually—there is no reason why they should be—less tenacious of their rights than others. There is no more incongruity in the greatest of them seeking the aid of the law to recover an overdue malt account than, when engaged upon one of his masterpieces, considering the tastes of the less refined of playgoers with

a shrewd anticipation of the financial results. He shared with Richard Burbage and Edward Alleyn the business ability that enabled them to amass wealth by catering for the amusement of the public. Lyric and epic poetry were probably neglected for this more profitable occupation, and indulged in merely as a pastime, or out of deference to the prevailing fashion of writing sonnets.

Beyond some little adverse criticism due to professional jealousy, the contemporary comments upon Shakespeare were in his favour. Ben Jonson, not always an indulgent critic,¹ paid a tribute which is of peculiar value on account of the personal knowledge which gave him the right to speak with authority. He affords us one of the very rare occasions upon which we are allowed to gain a clear view of Shakespeare's personality. In his "*Timber or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter*" Jonson wrote: "for I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. Hee was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantsie; brave notions and gentle expressions; wherein hee flow'd with that facility that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd; . . . But hee redeemed his vices with his vertues. There was ever more in him to be prayed than to be pardoned."

¹ F. Manning (*Poems*, 1701, p. 28) thus refers to him:—

"*Shakespear* of old, whom Nature did inspire,
Not surly *Ben* with all his labour'd Fire. . . ."

IX

A CHRONICLE—1552 TO 1670

THE foregoing references to incidents in the life of Shakespeare having been interrupted by comment and arranged without regard to the order of their occurrence, the following summary of events, which can be verified by reference to contemporary documents, is presented for the use of readers who prefer to have the facts without comment or conjecture and in their proper sequence. The chronicle commences with the earliest known reference to a Shakespeare in connection with Stratford-upon-Avon and ends with the burial of Elizabeth Barnard, the poet's grand-daughter and last lineal descendant.

Mr. Richard Savage has kindly verified the information relating to John Shakespeare, as a member of the Corporation, which is recorded in the *Miscellaneous Documents* or in *Council Book A*. The dates of baptisms, marriages, and burials are taken, unless otherwise specified, from the transcript of the Stratford-upon-Avon parish register, edited by Mr. Savage, or from his MS. notes. The particulars of proceedings in the local Court of Record are from *Selected Extracts from the Ancient Registry of the Causes* by Halliwell-Phillipps. The proceedings of the Corporation and the Court of Record are preserved in the Record Room at Shakespeare's Birthplace. The dates of entry of the poems and plays are taken from Dr. Arber's *Transcripts*. References to Shakespeare by contemporary writers are given in brief extracts :—

1552.
April 29. John Shakespeare was fined for disregarding the local sanitary regulations: "Item juratores presentant super sacramentum suum quod Humfridus Reynoldes xij^d, Adrianus Quayney xij^d, et Johannes Shakyspere, xij^d, fecerunt sterquinarium in vico vocato Hendley Strete contra ordinacionem curie; ideo ipsi in misericordia ut patet." *View of Frankpledge, Borough of Stratford*. Public Record Office, London, Portfolio 207.
1556.
June 17. Proceedings were taken in the Stratford-upon-Avon Court of Record by Thomas Syche for the recovery of £8 from "Johannem Shakyspere de Stretforde in comitatu Warwicensi, glover."
1556.
October 2. John Shakespeare purchased a house, garden, and croft in Greenhill Street and a house and garden in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon. Court Roll, Manor of Stratford. Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. vii. No. 40.
1556.
November 19. In the Court of Record John Shakespeare proceeded against Henry Field for the unjust detention of eighteen quarters of barley.
1556. Robert Arden of Wilmcote in the parish of Aston Cantlow died. His will, dated November 24th, 1556, was proved at Worcester on December 16th, 1556. Mary Arden, described in the will as Robert's youngest daughter, became the wife of John Shakespeare, but there is no record of the marriage. The Aston Cantlow parish registers commence in 1560.

1557. On June 3rd John Shakyspeyr, one of the ale-tasters for the borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, was fined eight pence for absence from the Court of Record. Stratford Corporation Records. *Proceedings of the Court of Record*, vol. i. fo. 22a.
1558. An order of distringas was given, in the
May 6. Court of Record, against "Johannem Shak-speyr" at the suit of Adrian Quyny and Thomas Knight.
1558. Baptism, "Jone Shakspeare, daughter to
September 15. John Shaxspere." There is no record of her burial. See baptism of another daughter Jone on April 15th, 1569.
1558. "The xij men have ordenyd ther trysty and
September 30. welbelovyd Humfrey Plymley, Roger Sadler, John Taylor and John Shakspeyr (jur.), constabulles." View of Frankpledge. Stratford Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. vii. No. 57.
1559. John Shakespeare was appointed affeelor,
October 6. or assessor of penalties not set down by statute. He was also re-appointed as Petty constable. Stratford Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. vii. No. 39.
- 1560-1. Administration of the estate of Richard
February 10. Shackspeare of Snytterfyld was granted to his son John Shakspeare of the same parish husbandman. *Testamenta Vetusta Vigorniensia*. Worcester Probate Registry.
1562. In a Corporation lease of this date John
October 3. Shakespeare is described as Chamberlain. Stratford Corporation Records. *Expired leases. Henley Street Ward*.

1562. Baptism, "Margareta filia Johannis Shak-
December 2. spere."

1562-3. John Tayler and John Shakspeyr presented
January 24. their accounts as chamberlains for the year
ended Michaelmas 1562. Corporation Records,
Miscellaneous Documents, vol. iii. No. 21.

1563. Burial, "Margareta filia Johannis Shak-
April 30. spere."

1563-4. John Tayler and John Shakespeare, Cham-
January 10. berlains, presented their accounts for the year
ended Michaelmas 1563, in which appears the
following: "Item payd to Shakspeyr for a
pec tymbur, iij^s." This is the earliest record in
Council Book A of business transacted, but a list
of the burgesses present at a Hall held on
December 20th, 1563, is entered on page 355.

1564. Baptism, "GULIELMUS FILIUS JOHANNES
April 26. SHAKSPERE."

1564. "At the Hall holdyn in oure garden the
August 30. 30 daye of Auguste anno 1564—moneys p^d
towards the rleffe of the poore—Jhon Shack-
sper—xij^d." *Council Book A*. At that time the
plague was prevalent in Stratford-upon-Avon.

1564. "Money payed the 6 of Septebor, A^o 1564
September 6. towards the releyff of those y^e be vysytyd—
Jhon Shaksper vi^d." *Council Book A*.

1565. "At thys Hall John Shakspeyr ys ap-
July 4. pwynted an alderman."

1565. "Peyd to Shakspeyr for a rest of old
debt iij^{li} ij^s, vij^d." Chamberlain's accounts to
Michaelmas 1565.

1566. John Shakespeare became bail for one September. Richard Hathaway in an action in the Court of Record.

1566. Baptism, "Gilbertus, filius Johannis October 13. Shakspeare."

1568. "The names whereof one to be balyf, Mr. September 4. John Shakysper, Mr. Robert Perrot, Robert Salusburye." The first named presided as High bailiff over the Council-meeting on October 1st and the Court of Record on October 6th.

1568 and 1569. The payment of nine shillings to the Queen's and twelve pence to the Earl of Worcester's players, on their visit to Stratford-upon-Avon, is entered in the Chamberlain's Accounts.

1569. Baptism, "Jone the daughter of John April 15. Shakspeare."

1571. "Mr. John Shakespere was elected alder- September 5. man for the yere to come and ys sworne." The word "chief" is omitted; but he had been an alderman from 1565. In the record of the next meeting he is styled "*cap. aldermanni*."

1571. Baptism, "Anna filia magistri Shakspeare." September 28.

1571. Simon Hunt was appointed by the Bishop October 29. of Worcester to teach in the Grammar School at Stratford-upon-Avon. *Bullingham's Register*, fo. 5a. Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

1573-4. Baptism, "Richard sonne to Mr. John March 11. Shakspeer."

1575. Queen Elizabeth visited Kenilworth Castle.
 July.
 1575. John Shakespeare purchased, for the sum
 October. of £40, two houses with gardens and orchards
 in Stratford-upon-Avon. A record of the Fine
 levied in Michaelmas term 17 and 18 Eliz. is in
 the Public Record Office.
1577. "Item paid to my Lord of Leyster's
 players xv^s." Chamberlain's Accounts to
 March 1577—*Council Book A*.
- 1577-8. "At this Hall yt ys agreed that every
 January 29. alderman excepte suche under wrytten excepted,
 shall paye towardes the furniture of thre pike
 men, ij billmen and one archer vj^s viij^d and
 every burgesse excepte suche under wrytten
 excepted shall pay iij^s iiij^d.
 Mr. Plumley v^s
 Mr. Shaxpeare iij^s iiij^d } Aldermen "
 (and five others). John Shakespeare was not
 present on this occasion.
1578. In the will of Roger Saddeler of Stratford-
 November 14. upon-Avon, baker, a list of debts which were
 owing to him includes the following: "Item
 of Edmonde Lamberte and . . . Cornishe for
 the debte of Mr. John Shaksper v^s." From the
 registered copy of the will, which was proved
 on January 17th, 1578-9. Principal Probate
 Registry, Somerset House, No. 1 *Bakon*.
1578. John Shakespeare was exempted from the
 November 19. weekly tax of four pence for the poor, which
 had been levied upon the aldermen.
1578. John Shakespeare was absent from the eight
 Council meetings of which the attendances are
 recorded.

1578-9. In a list of persons, whose levy for the purchase of arms was "unpayd and unaccounted for," presented to the Council is the following; "Mr. Shaxpeare iij^s iiij^d."

March 11.

1579. A fine was levied after the mortgage, in Easter Term. 1578, of the small estate of Asbies, in Wilmcote, by John and Mary Shakespeare to Edmund Lambert for the sum of £40. The record of the Fine is in the Public Record Office.

1579. Burial, "Anne daughter to Mr. John Shakspeare."
April 4.

1579. "Item for the bell and pall for Mr. Shaxper's dawghter, viii^d." Chamberlain's Accounts in *Council Book A*.

1579. The interest of John and Mary Shakespeare
October 15. in two messuages at Snitterfield was conveyed to Robert Webbe. In this deed John Shakespeare is described as "Yeoman." The conveyance and bond are in the Birthplace Museum.

1579. John Shakespeare was absent from all the Council meetings the attendances at which are recorded.

1580. Baptism, "Edmund, sonne to Mr. John Shakspeare."
May 3. Edmund was the eighth and last child of John and Mary Shakespeare.

1580. John Shakespeare was absent from the eight recorded Council meetings.

1580. In a "Replication" made by John and September 29. Mary Shakespeare in Michaelmas Term 1598 it is stated that a tender of the £40 borrowed on the security of Asbies was refused by Edmund Lambert in 1580 on the ground that other money was owing. Public Record Office. For a copy of the document, see *Outlines*, ii. 16-7.

1581. John Shakespeare was absent from all the recorded meetings of the Council.

1582. John Shakespeare was cited as witness before a special commission in a Chancery suit concerning the Arden estates. Stratford Corporation Records. *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. ii. No. 85.

1582. A licence was granted for the marriage of November 27. William Shaxpere and Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton. *Bishop Whitgift's Register*, folio 43b. Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

1582. A bond was executed for the grant of a November 28. marriage licence to William Shagspere and Anne Hathway of Stratford upon Avon. Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

1582. In this year John Shakespeare was present at only one Council meeting, that held on September 5th, for the election of bailiff, when he voted for John Sadler who was "thought most metest to execute the office."

1583. Baptism, "Susanna daughter to William May 26. Shakspere."

1583. John Shakespeare was absent from the fourteen recorded Council meetings.

1584-5. Baptisms, "Hamnet and Judeth, sonne and February 2. daughter to Willia Shakspere."

1585. "Eleccoon of Tasters. John Shaxpere and September 2. Humfry Brace." A shoemaker named John Shakespeare resided at Stratford from about 1584 to 1595. For an account of "Shakespeare the Corvizer," see *Outlines*, ii. 137-40.

1585-6. In the return to a writ issued against John January 19. Shakespeare, it was stated that he had no goods upon which distraint could be made. Other writs were issued against him in the year 1586.

1586. "At thys halle Will^m Smythe and Richard September 6. Cowrte are chosen to be Aldermen in the places of John Wheler and John Shaxspere for that Mr. Wheler dothe desyre to be put owt of the Companye and Mr. Shaxspere dothe not come to the Halles when they be warned nor hathe not done of longe tyme."

1586. John Shaxspere was elected a constable. See September 6. election of September 2nd, 1585.

1586-7. An action was brought against John Shake- January 18. speare by Nicolas Lane to recover the sum of £10 for which the former had become responsible, as part of a debt owing by his brother Henry.

1587. John Shakespeare produced a writ of *habeas-* March 29. *corpus* in the Stratford Court of Record.

1588. Actions in which John Shakespeare was concerned, both as plaintiff and defendant, are found in the proceedings of the Court of Record. Particulars of these and numerous other actions, before and after this date, are given in *Outlines*, ii. 216, 46.

1588-9. Baptism, "Thomas, sonne to Richard
February 26. Queeny."

1589. A Bill of Complaint was brought by John
Michaelmas Shakespeare against John Lambert with respect
Term. to an alleged arrangement as to the Asbies
estate, made in 1587. William Shakespeare is
named in the bill. *Coram Rege Rolls*, Public
Record Office. For a copy, see *Outlines*, ii.
11-3.

1589-90. Burial, "Thomas Green alias Shak-
March 6. spere."

1590. In an inquisition as to the lands of the
Earl of Warwick, John Shakespeare's property
in Henley Street is described. From a manu-
script in the Birthplace Library.

1591-2. *Henry VI.* is mentioned in *Henslowe's Diary*:
March 3. "R^d at henery the vj the 3 of Marche 1591
iijⁿ xvjⁿ v^d."

1592. Thomas Nash. *Pierce Penniless* entered in
August 8. the Stationers' Register.

"How would it have joy'd brave Talbot
(the terror of the French) to thinke that after
he had lyne two hundred yeare in his tombe,
hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and
have his bones new embalmed with the teares
of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall
times) who, in the tragedian that represents
his person, imagine they behold him fresh
bleeding."

Compare with Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI.*,
iv. 5-7, published in 1623.

1592. John Shakespeare assisted in valuing the
August 21. goods of "Henry Feelde late of Stretford-uppon-Avon in the County of Warwyke, Tanner, now deceased." Stratford Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. i. No. 3.

1592. Robert Greene the dramatist died. In his
September 3. *Groatsworth of Wit*, published in 1592, he alludes to "the only Shake-scene" and parodies a line from Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI.* i. 4. "his Tyger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide." In the following December Henry Chettle, Greene's publisher, issued his *Kind Hartes Dream*, in which he apologised for the attack.

1592. John Shakespeare's name appears in a list
September 25. of recusants who had also been previously presented "for not comminge monethlie to the Church."

Commissioner's Returns at Warwick Castle.
See also *Calendar of State Papers—Domestic*, p. 290. November 1592.

1593. *Venus and Adonis* was entered in the register
April 18. of the Stationers' Company. Arber's *Transcript of the Stationers' Registers*, ii. 630. The poem was published in 1593 by Richard Field. 4^{to}.

1593. Baptism, "Thomas filius Anthonii Nash
June 20. gen."

1593-4. *Titus Andronicus* was acted by the "Earl
January 23. of Sussex men." *Henslowe's Diary*.

1593-4. *Titus Andronicus* was entered in the
February 6. Stationers' Register. Arber, ii. 644. The play was published in 1594. 4^{to}.

1593-4. "A Booke intituled the firste parte of the
March 12. Contention of the two famous houses of York
and Lancaster" was entered in the Stationers'
Register (Arber, ii. 646) and was published in
the same year.

Compare with 2 *Henry VI.*, published in
1623.

1594. "*The Taymings of a Shroove*" was entered
May 2. in the Stationers' Register. Arber, ii. 648.

1594. *Lucrece* was entered in the Stationers'
May 9. Register. Arber, ii. 648. The poem was pub-
lished in 1594 by Richard Field.

1594. The first record of Shakespeare's appearance
December 26 as an actor occurs in the accounts of the Trea-
and 28. surer of the Chamber: "To William Kempe,
William Shakespeare and Richarde Burbage,
servauntes to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the
Councelle's warrant dated at Whitehall xvth
Marcij 1594, for twoe severall comedies or
enterludes shewed by them before her majestie
in Christmas tyme laste paste viz upon St.
Stephen's daye and Innocentes daye xiiijth vj^s
viii^d, and by waye of her majesties Rewarde
vjth xiiij, iiiij^d, in all, xxth." Public Record
Office. Pipe Office Declared Accounts, Vol.
542, fo. 207b.

1594. Henry Willobie, *Avisa*. The earliest refer-
ence to Shakespeare by name occurs in some
introductory verses:—

"And Shak-speare paints poor Lucrece' rape."

1594-5. At this date the last entry of John Shake-
March 19. speare's name appears in the Stratford Court
of Record.

1595. *Edward III.* entered in the Stationers' December 1. Register. Arber, iii. 55. The play was published in 1596. 4^{to}.

1595. "The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke and the death of good King Henry the Sixt with the whole contention betweene the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke" was published, 4^{to}. Compare with *3 Henry VI.*, published in 1623.

1595. William Clarke, *Polimanteia*. (Unpaged.) "All praiseworthy Lucrecia Sweet Shakespeare."

1596. Burial, "Hamnet filius William Shakespeare." August 11.

1596. A draft grant of Arms to John Shakespeare, October 20. bears this date. The document is at Heralds' College.

1596-7. John Shakespeare sold a strip of land on January 26. the west side of the Henley Street property to George Badger for the sum of £2 10s. 0d. The document is at the Birthplace Museum.

1597. William Shakespeare purchased from May 4. William Underhill, for the sum of £60, the house and grounds known as New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon. A copy of the fine levied in Easter Term 1597 is in the Birthplace Museum.

1597. *Richard II.* was entered in the Stationers' August 29. Register. Arber, iii. 89. The play was published in 1597. 4^{to}.

1597. *Richard III.* was entered in the Stationers' October 20. Register. Arber, iii. 93. The play was published in 1597. 4^{to}.

1597. A Bill was filed in Chancery by John and November 24. Mary Shakespeare for the recovery of Asbies. The result is unknown. For a copy of the Bill of Complaint, John Lambert's Answer, and the Plaintiffs' Replication, now at the Public Record Office, see *Outlines*, ii. 14-7.

1597. *Love's Labour's Lost* was played before the December 26. Court at Whitehall. See title-page of the Quarto published in 1598.

1597. An imperfect edition of *Romeo and Juliet* was published by W. Danter. 4^{to}.

1597-8. A letter, written by Abraham Sturley, of January 24. Stratford-upon-Avon, contains a reference to Shakespeare's willingness "to disburse some monei upon some od yarde land or other at Shotterie" and also to "the matter of our tithes." The name of the addressee is unknown. The original is among the Corporation Records at the Birthplace.

1597-8. In a return made at a time of famine February 4. William Shakespeare was named as the holder of ten quarters of corn in Chapel Street Ward in which New Place was situated. John Shakespeare's name is not in the return. Stratford Corporation Records. *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. i. No. 106.

1597-8. "*The historye of Henry the iiij.*" was entered February 25. in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 105. The play of *1 Henry IV.* was published in 1598. 4^{to}.

1598. *The Merchant of Venice* was entered in the July 22. Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 122. The play was published in 1600. 4^{to}.

1598. At the end of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, in the folio edition of his plays, 1616, p. 72, is the following: "This Comœdie was first Acted, in the yeere 1598. By the then L. Chamberlayne his Servants. The principall Comœdians were—

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Will. Shakespeare | Ric. Burbage |
| Aug. Philips | Joh. Hemings |
| Hen. Condel | Tho. Pope |
| Will. Slye | Chr. Beeston |
| Will. Kempe | Joh. Duke." |

1598. Richard Quiney, during a visit to London,
October 25. addressed a letter to his "loveinge good ffrend and contreyman Mr. Wm. Shackespere" on the subject of a loan of £30 wherewith to pay some debts owing by the applicant. Quiney was a Stratford tradesman and twice high bailiff. His son Thomas Quiney married Shakespeare's daughter Judith. The letter is at the Birthplace Museum.

1598. In a letter from Abraham Sturley to
November 4. Richard Quiney, Shakespeare is mentioned as taking part in negotiations for a loan of money.

1598. "*Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury Being the Second part of Wits' Commonwealth*" by Francis Meres, was printed in this year. It contains the following references to Shakespeare and some of his poems and plays, pp. 281b-282a:—

"As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in *Pythagoras*, so the sweete wittie soule of *Ovid* lives in mellifuous and hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus and Adonis*, his

Luorece, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c. As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among y^e English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love labors lost*, his *Love labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*: for tragedy, *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*. As *Epius Stolo* said that the Muses would speake with *Plautus* tongue, if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeares* fine filed phrase, if they would speake English."

1598. Richard Barnfield. *Poems: in Divers Humors*. A Remembrance of some English Poets—

"And Shakespeare thou, whose hony-flowing Vaine,
(Pleasing the World) thy Praises doth obtaine.
Whose Venus, and whose Lucrece (sweete, and
chaste)
Thy Name in fames immortall Booke have plac't.
Live ever you, at least in Fame live ever:
Well may the Bodye dye, but Fame dies never."

- 1598-9. Edmund Spenser died.
January 13.

1599. *The Passionate Pilgrim* was published by W. Jaggard.

1599. The grant of arms made to John Shakespeare was confirmed in this year. The draft is at Heralds' College.

1599. The Globe Theatre was built, and Shakespeare became the owner of a share in the profits. See petitions by the Burbages to the Lord Chamberlain in 1635. Public Record Office. Printed in *Outlines*, i. 312-9.
1600. Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote died.
July.
1600. *Henry V.*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* were entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 37. The first and third were printed in 1600, and *As You Like It* in 1623. 4^{vo}.
August 4.
1600. *2 Henry IV.* was entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 170. The play was published in 1600. 4^{vo}.
August 23.
1600. Baptism, "Wilhelmus, filius Wilhelmi
August 28.; Hart."
1600. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 174. The play was published in 1600. 4^{vo}.
October 8.
1600. In *Belvedere or the Garden of the Muses*, edited by John Bodenham, Shakespeare's name is the thirteenth in a list of "moderne and extante poets," and is preceded by Marlowe and Ben Jonson.
1601. Thomas Whittington bequeathed to the poor of Stratford forty shillings "that is in the hand of Anne Shaxspere wyfe unto Mr. Wylyyam Shaxspere." The will was proved at Worcester, April 29th, 1601.
March 25.
A Thomas Whittington is described in Richard Hathaway's will as "my sheephred."

1601. John Shakespeare assisted in preparing the case for Counsel in an action brought by Sir Edward Greville against the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon respecting the Toll-corn. Stratford Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. 5, No. 20.
1601. Burial, "Mr. Johaⁿes Shakspeare."
September 8.
1601. The "*Phoenix and Turtle*" was published in Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr or Rosalin's Complaint*.
- 1601-2. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was entered in
January 18. the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 199. The play was published in 1602. 4^{to}.
- 1601-2. *Twelfth Night* was played at the Middle
February 2. Temple. *Manningham's Diary*. Camden Society's edition, 1868, p. 18. The original is in the British Museum.
1602. "The first and second parte of *Henry the*
April 19. *VI.*, ij bookes," entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 204. Compare with 2 and 3 *Henry VI.*, published in 1623.
1602. William Shakespeare purchased from
May 1. William and John Combe 107 acres of arable land near Stratford-upon-Avon for the sum of £320. The conveyance was "sealed and delivered to Gilbert Shakespere to the use of the within named William Shakespere." The original is in the Birthplace Museum. See fine levied in Trinity Term, 1610.

1602. *Hamlet* was entered in the Stationers' Register "as yt was latelie acted by the Ld. Chamberleyn his servantes." Arber, iii. 212. The play was published in 1603. 4^{vo}.

1602. William Shakespeare purchased from September 28. Walter Getley a small copyhold property in Chapel Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon. The record is in the Birthplace Museum.

1602-3. *Troilus and Cressida* "as yt is acted by my February 7. Lord Chamberleyn's Men" was entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 226. The play was published in 1609. 4^{vo}.

1602-3. Queen Elizabeth died.
March 24.

1603. Under a Warrant from King James I., May 17. Shakespeare's company of players received a licence "freely to use and exercise the arte and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, &c." The names mentioned are Laurence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillipps, John Hemmings, Henrie Condell, William Sly, Robert Armin, and Richard Cowlye. Public Record Office Museum.

1603. At the end of Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, in the folio edition of his plays, 1616, p. 438, is the following: "This Tragoedie was first acted, in the yeere 1603. By the King's Majesties Servants. The principall Tragoedians were

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Ric. Burbage | Will. Shake-speare |
| Aug. Philips | Joh. Hemings |
| Will. Sly | Hen. Condell |
| Joh. Lowin | Alex. Cooke." |

1604. William Shakespeare sued Philip Rogers at
July. Stratford-upon-Avon for the balance of an
account for malt and a small loan of money.
The Declaration is in the Birthplace Museum.
1604. Anthony Scoloker. *Daiphantus or the
Passions of Love*. "Or to come home to the
vulgars Element, like Friendly Shake-speare's
Tragedies, where the Commedian rides, when the
Tragedian stands on Tip-toe: Faith it should
please all, like Prince Hamlet." Dr. Grosart's
edition, 1880, p. 3.
1605. William Shakespeare, who is described in
July 24. the conveyance as of Stratford-upon-Avon
Gentleman, purchased for £440 from Ralph
Huband the unexpired term of thirty-one
years of a moiety of the tithes of Stratford,
Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. The
original documents are in the Museum and
in the Corporation Record Room at the Birth-
place. *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. ii. No. 2.
1605. By his will dated May 4th, 1605, Augustine
Phillips (the actor) "of Mortlake, gentleman,"
made the following bequest: "I give and
bequeath to my fellowe William Shakespeare a
xxx^s peece in gould." From the registered
copy at the Principal Probate Registry, No. 31
Hayes.
1605. William Camden, *Remains of a Greater
Workes Concerning Britaine*. Poems, etc., p. 8.
"These may suffice for some Poeticall descrip-
tions of our auncient Poets, if I would come to
our time, what a world could I present to you
out of Sir Philipp Sydney, Ed. Spenser, Samuel
Daniel, Hugh Holland, Ben. Johnson, Th.

Campion, Mich. Drayton, George Chapman, John Marston, William Shakespeare, & other most pregnant witts of these our times, whom succeeding ages may justly admire."

1606. " *The Return from Parnassus or The Scourge of Simony*. Publicuely acted by the Students in Saint John's Colledge in Cambridge."

"Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all downe, I and Ben Jonson too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow! he brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him beray his credit": English Scholar's Library, Dr. Arber's Reprint.

1606-7. " *Romeo and Juliett, Loves Labour Loste, The*
January 22. *taminge of a Shrewe*" were entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 337. *Romeo and Juliet* was published in 1597, 4^{to}; *Love's Labour's Lost* in 1598, 4^{to}; and *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1623.

1607. Marriage, "John Hall, Gentleman and
June 5. Susanna Shaxspere."

1607. *King Lear*, "As yt was played before the
November 26. Kinge's Majestie at Whitehall, uppon Sainct Stephen's night at Christmas last by his Majestie's servantes playinge usually at the Globe on the Banksyde," was entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 366. The play was published in 1608. 4^{to}.

1607. The burial of Edmund Shakspeare, "a
December 31. player," is recorded in the parish register of Saint Saviour's, Southwark.

1607. William Barkstead. *Mirrha, the mother of Adonis*. (From Dr. Grosart's edition, 1876, p. 65)—
 "His song was worthie meritt (Shakspeare hee),
 sung the faire blossome, thou the withered tree,
 Laurell is due to him, his art and wit
 hath purchast it, Cypres thy brow will fit."
- 1607-8. Baptism, "Elizabeth dawghter to John
 February 21. Hall, gen."
1608. "A booke called *A Yorkshire Tragedy*
 May 2. written by Wylliam Shakespere" was entered
 in the Stationers' Register. Arber, iii. 377.
 The play was published in the same year. 4^{to}.
1608. "Perycles prynce of Tyre" and "Anthony
 May 20. and Cleopatra" were entered in the Stationers'
 Register. Arber, iii. 378. The former was
 published in 1609 (4^{to}), the latter in 1623.
1608. Burial, "Mary Shaxspere wydowe."
 September 9.
1608. William, the son of Henry Walker, a Strat-
 October 16. ford alderman, was baptized. In Shakespeare's
 will is the following bequest: "to my god-son
 William Walker xx^s in gold."
- 1608 and 1609. At Stratford-upon-Avon "William Shake-
 speare, Gent." sued John Addenbrooke for a
 debt. The documents are in the Birthplace
 Museum and in the Corporation Records. *Mis-
 cellaneous Documents*, vol. v. Nos. 127-9.
1609. "A Booke called *Shakespeare's sonnettes*"
 May 20. was entered in the Stationers' Register. Arber,
 iii. 410. The book was published in the same
 year. 4^{to}.

1609. Thomas Greene, Town Clerk of Stratford, September. alludes, in a diary, to his residence in Shakespeare's house: "the rather because I perceyved I might stay another year at New Place."

1610. A fine was levied on the purchase by William Trinity Term. Shakespeare from William and John Combe, of "centum et septem acris terre, et vigniti acris pasture" in Old Stratford. The Foot of Fine is in the Public Record Office. See purchase on May 1st, 1602.

1610. John Davies, of Hereford. *The Scourge of*
October 8. *Folly*. Epigram No. 159. "To our English Terence, Mr. Will Shake-speare.

Some say, good Will, (which I, in sport do sing)
Had'st thou not plaid some Kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst bin a companion for a King;
And beene a King among the meaner sort.
Some others raile; but, raile as they thinke fit,
Thou hast no rayling, but, a rainging Wit.

And honesty thou sow'st, which they do reape;
So, to increase their Stocke which they do keepe."

1610 and 1611. In the "*Booke of Plaies and Notes thereof*" Dr. Forman comments upon the following performances at which he was present: "In the Winters Talle at the Glob 1611 the 15 of Maye, Wednesday." "Of Cymbalin King of England." [No data.] "In Mackbeth at the Glob, 1610 the 20 of April Saturday." The original is in the Bodleian Library. *Ashm. Coll.* 208, fo. 201b.

1611. William Shakespeare's name appears on the
September 11. margin of a document relating to the "better repayre of the highe waies." Stratford Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. i. No 4.

1611-2. Burial, "Gilbertus Shakspeare, adolescens."
February 3.

1612. John Webster. *The White Devil*. "Detraction is the sworne friend to ignorance; for mine owne part, I have ever truly cherish't my good opinion of other men's worthy labours; especially of that full and hightened stile of Maister Chapman, the labour'd and understanding works of Maister Johnson, the no lesse worthy composures of the both worthily and excellent Maister Beaumont and Maister Fletcher; and lastly (without wrong last to be named) the right happy and copious industry of M. Shake-speare, M. Decker, and M. Heywood."

1612-3. Burial, "Rich^d Shakspeare."
February 4.

1612-3. William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-
March 10. Avon, Gentleman, purchased from Henry Walker, a citizen of London, a house near the Blackfriars Theatre, London. The conveyance is in the Guildhall Library, London.

1612-3. The house purchased from Henry Walker
March 11. was mortgaged to him for the sum of £60. The Original deed is in the British Museum.

1613. The Globe Theatre, Blackfriars, was de-
June 29. stroyed, having taken fire during a perform-
ance of *Henry VIII*.

1613. A sentence of excommunication against
July 27. John Lane is recorded as the result of a defa-
mation suit, in the Worcester Consistory Court, brought by Susanna Hall, the poet's elder daughter. *Act Book No. 9*, Worcester Diocesan Registry. See also *Outlines*, ii. 243-4.

1614. "Mr Shakspeare" is mentioned in a list of
September 5. the "Auncient freeholders in the fields of Old Stratford and Welcombe" as having "4 yard land noe common nor ground beyond Gospell-bushe, nor ground in Sandfield, nor none in Slow-hill-field beyond Bishopton, nor none in the enclosures beyond Bishopton." Stratford Corporation Records, *Miscellaneous Documents*, vol. i. No 94.

1614. An agreement was entered into between
October 28. "William Shackespeare of Stratford in the county of Warwicke gent:" and William Rep-lingham, by which Shakespeare was guaranteed against any loss which might arise from a proposed enclosure of part of the Common fields at Welcombe in the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon. Shakespeare's Birthplace Records. *Wheler Collection*.

1614. Thomas Freeman, *Runne and a Great Cast*.
"The Second Bowle." Epigram 92. "To Master W: Shakespeare.

Shakespeare, that nimble Mercury thy braine,
Lulls many hundred Argus-eyes asleepe,
So fit, for all thou fashionest thy vaine,
At th' horse-foote fountaine thou hast drunk full
deepe,

Then let thine owne works thine owne worth
upraise,
And help t' adorne thee with deserved Bates."

1614. In the Chamberlain's accounts for this year, presented to the Council, is the following entry: "Item: for one quart of sack, and one quart of clarrett winne geven to a preacher at the Newe Place, xx^d." Stratford Corporation Records—*Book of Accounts*, 1585-1619.

1614. Burial, "Mr. John Combes generosus."
- July 12. He bequeathed £5 to William Shakespeare. The will is in the Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House.
1614. Richard Carew, *Excellencie of the English Tongue* in *Camden's Remaines*, pp. 43-4.
 "Whatsoever grace any other language carrieth in verse or prose, in tropes or metaphors, in ecchoes and agnominations, they may all bee lively and exactly represented in ours. Will you have Platoes veine? reade Sir Thomas Smith. . . . Will you reade Virgill? take the Earle of Surrey. Catullus? Shakespeare, and Barlowes fragment."
- 1614 and 1615. In the diary of Thomas Greene of Stratford-upon-Avon, there are references to "my cosen Shakspear," on the subject of a proposed enclosure of land at Welcombe and other business matters. The diary is in the Record Room at the Birthplace.
1615. "*The Annales, or a Generall Chronicle of England*, begun by Maister John Stow, and after him continued and augmented . . . by Edmond Howes," p. 811.
 "Our moderne and present excellent Poets, which worthely flourish in their owne workes, and all of them in my owne knowledge, lived together in this Queene's raigne, according to their priorities, as neere as I could, I have orderly set downe (viz) George Gascoigne esquire; . . . Edmond Spencer Esquire, Sir Philip Sidney Knight, . . . Sir Frauncis Bacon Knight, . . . Master John Lillie, gentleman, Maister George Chapman, Gentleman, . . . M. Willi. Shakespeare, gentleman, . . . Michaell Draiton, esquire of the bath, M. Christopher Marlo, gen.," &c.

1615-6. Marriage, "Tho. Queeny tow Judith Shak-
February 10. spere."

1615-6, Thomas Quiney and his wife were cited to
between Feb- appear before the Consistory Court at Wor-
bruary 10 and cester for marrying without a licence. *Visita-*
May 11. *tion Book.* Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

1616. William Shakespeare's last will and testa-
March 25. ment bears this date.

1616. Burial, "Will Hartt, hatter."
April 17.

1616. William Shakespeare died.
April 23.

1616. Burial, "Will. Shakspere, gent."
April 25. The following is inscribed on his monument
in the chancel of the church of Holy Trinity,
Stratford upon Avon :—

Judicio Pylum, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.
Stay Passenger, why goest thou by so fast!
Read if thou canst, whom envious Death hath plast,
Within this monument Shakespeare: with whome,
Quick nature dide: whose name, doth deck y^e Tombe,
Far more, then cost: sith all y^e He hath writt,
Leaves living art, but page, to serve his witt.

Obiit año doⁱ 1616. Ætatis 53 Die 23 Ap.

1616. Baptism, "Shakspere, fillius Thomas Quyny,
November 23. gent."

1617. Burial, "Shakspere, fillius Tho. Quyny,
May 8. gent."

1617-8. Baptism, "Richard fillius Thomas Quinee."
February 9.

1619-20. Baptism, "Thomas fili. to Thomas Queeney."
January 23.

1621. *Othello* entered in the Stationers' Registers.
October 6. Arber, iv. 59. The play was published in
1622. 4^{to}.

1623. Anne, widow of William Shakespeare died.
August 6.

1623. Burial, "Mrs. Shakspeare."
August 8. The following inscription is engraved upon
a brass plate affixed to her tomb-stone in the
chancel of Stratford church:—

"Heere lyeth interred the body of Anne
wife of William Shakespeare who deſtēd this
life the 6th day of Augū: 1623. being of the
age of 67 yeares.

Vbera, tu, mater, tu lac, vitamq. dedisti.

Vae mihi. pro tanto munere saxa dabo?

Quam mallet amoueat lapidem, bonus Angel[us] ore

Exeat ut, Christi corpus, imago tua.

Sed nil vota valent; venias cito Christe; resurget,

Clausa licet tumulto mater et astra petet."

1623. Entered in the Stationers' Register (Arber,
November 8. iv. 107):—

"Mr. William Shakspeers Comedyes, His-
tories and Tragedyes, soe manie of the said
copies as are not formerly entred to other men
viz Comedyes. The Tempest. The two gentle-
men of Verona. Measure for Measure. The
Comedy of Errors. As you like it. All's well
that ends well. Twelft Night. The winters
tale. Histories. The thirde parte of Henry
the sixt. Henry the eight. Tragedies. Corio-
lanns. Timon of Athens. Julius Cæsar. Mack-
beth. Anthonie and Cleopatra. Cymbeline."

1623.

The First Folio was published, and is thus described on the title-page: "Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies Histories and Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies. London. Printed by Isaac Jaggard and Ed. Blount. 1623."

The following references to Shakespeare are taken from the various introductory dedications and addresses:—

"It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth and overseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected & publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that exposd them: even those are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

John Heminge.—Henrie Condell.

To the memory of my beloved, the Author
Mr. William Shakespeare: And what he hath
left us.

To draw no envy (Shakespeare) on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy Booke and fame :

While I confesse thy writings to be such,
As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much.

I, therefore, will begin. Soule of the age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!
My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
A little further, to make thee a roome:
Thou art a Monument, without a tombe,
And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses;
I meane with great, but disproportion'd Muses:
For, if I thought my judgement were of yeeres,
I should commit thee surely with thy peeres,
And tell, how farre thou didst out our Lily out-
shine,
Or sporting Kid, or Marlowes mighty line.
And though thou hadst small Latine and lesse
Greeke,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke.
For names;

For a good Poet's made, as well as borne,
And such wert thou. Looke how the fathers face
Lives in his issue, even so, the race
Of Shakespeares minde, and manners brightly
shines

In his well-torned, and true-filed lines:
In each of which he seems to shake a Lance,
As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
And make those flights upon the bankes of
Thames,

That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere
Advanc'd, and made a Constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets, and with rage,



Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping stage ;
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd
like night,
And despaire day, but for thy Volumes light.

BEN : JONSON.

Upon the Lines and Life of the Famous
Scenicke Poet Master William Shakespeare.

Those hands, which you so clapt, go now and wring,
You Britaines brave ; for done are Shakespeares
dayes :

His dayes are done that made the dainty Playes,
Which made the Globe of heav'n and earth to ring.
Dry'de is that veine, dry'd is the Thespian spring,
Turn'd all to teares, and Phœbus clouds his rayes :
That corp's, that coffin now besticke those bayes,
Which crown'd him Poet first, then Poets King.

If Tragedies might any Prologue have,
All those he made, would scarce make one to this :
Where Fame, now that he gone is to the grave,
(Death's publike tyring-house) the Nuncius is.

For though his line of life went soone about,
The life yet of his lines shall never out.

HVGH HOLLAND.

To the Memorie of the deceased Authour
Maister W. Shakespeare.

Shake-speare, at length thy pious fellowes give
The world thy Workes : thy Workes, by which, out-
live

Thy Tombe, thy name must ; when that stone is rent,
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Moniment,
Here we alive shall view thee still. This Booke,
When Brasse and Marble fade, shall make thee looke
Fresh to all ages : when Posteritie
Shall loath what's new, thinke all is prodegie
That is not Shake-speares ; ev'ry Line, each verse
Here shall revive, redeeme thee from thy Herse.
Nor Fire, nor cankring Age, as Naso said,

Of his, thy wit-fraught Booke, shall once invade.
 Nor shall I e're beleeeve, or thinke thee dead
 (Though mist) untill our bankrout Stage be sped
 (Impossible) with some new straine t' out-do
 Passions of Juliet, and her Romeo;
 Or till I heare a Scene more nobly take,
 Then when thy half-sword parlying Romans spake.
 Till these, till any of thy Volumes rest
 Shall with more fire, more feeling be exprest,
 Be sure, our Shake-speare, thou canst never dye,
 But crown'd with Lawrell, live eternally.

L. DIGGES.

To the memorie of M. W. Shake-speare.

Wee wondred (Shake-speare) that thou went'st so
 soone

From the Worlds-Stage, to the Graves-Tyring-
 roome.

Wee thought thee dead, but this, thy printed worth,
 Tels thy Spectators, that thou went'st but forth
 To enter with applause. An Actors Art,
 Can dye, and live, to acte a second part.
 That's but an Exit of Mortalitie;
 This, a Re-entrance to a Plaudite.

I. M.

The names of the Principall Actors in all
 these Playes

William Shakespeare
 Richard Burbadge
 John Hemmings
 Augustine Phillips
 William Kempt
 Thomas Poope
 George Bryan
 Henry Condell
 William Slye
 Richard Cowly
 John Lowine
 Samuell Crosse
 Alexander Cooke

Samuel Gilburne
 Robert Armin
 William Ostler
 Nathan Field
 John Underwood
 Nicholas Tooley
 William Ecclestone
 Joseph Taylor
 Robert Benfield
 Robert Goughe
 Richard Robinson
 John Shancke
 John Rice

A Catalogue of the severall Comedies,
Histories and Tragedies contained in this
Volume

COMEDIES

The Tempest
Te Two Gentlemen of Ve-
rona
The Merry Wives of Windsor
Measure for Measure
The Comedy of Errours
Much Adoo about Nothing
Loves Labour Lost
Midsommer Nights Dreame
The Merchant of Venice
As You Like It
The Taming of the Shrew
All is well that Ends well
Twelfe-Night or What you
will
The Winters Tale

HISTORIES

The Life and Death of King
John
The Life and Death of
Richard the Second
The First Part of King
Henry the Fourth
The Second Part of King
Henry the Fourth

HISTORIES—*continued*

The Life of King Henry the
Fifth
The First part of King
Henry the Sixt
The Second part of King
Henry the Sixt
The Third part of King
Henry the Sixt
The Life and Death of
Richard the Third
The Life of King Henry
the Eight

TRAGEDIES

The Tragedy of Coriolanus
Titus Andronicus
Romeo and Juliet
Timon of Athens
The Life and Death of
Julius Caesar
The Tragedy of Macbeth
The Tragedy of Hamlet
King Lear
Othello the Moore of Venice
Anthony and Cleopater
Cymbeline King of Britaine

1626. Marriage, "Mr. Thomas Nash to Mrs. Eliza-
April 22. beth Hall." Elizabeth Hall was Shakespeare's
grand-daughter; Nash was her first husband.

1632. John Milton. Epitaph on Shakespeare.
Copied from the Second Folio edition of
Shakespeare's plays. For other versions see
subsequent editions of Milton's Works.

What neede my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones
The labour of an Age in piled stones
Or that his hallow'd Reliques should be hid

Under a starre-ypointing Pyramid?
 Deare sonne of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such dull witnessse of thy Name
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment
 Hast built thyselfe a lasting Monument.
 For whilst, to th' shame of slow-endavouring Art
 Thy easie numbers flow, and that each part
 Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Booke
 Those Delphicke Lines with deepe Impression tooke
 Then thou our fancy of herself bereaving,
 Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving,
 And so Sepulchr'd in such pompe dost lie
 That Kings for such a Tombe would wish to die.

1634. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was entered in the
 April 8. Stationers' Register. Arber, iv. 316. Published
 in 1634.

1635. Burial, "Johannes Hall, medicus peri-
 November 26. tissimus."

1638-9. Burial, "Thomas Filius Thomæ Quiney."
 January 28.

1638-9. Burial, "Richardus, filius Tho. Quiney."
 February 26.

1641. Ben Jonson. *Timber or Discoveries*. First
 published in 1641. Jonson died in 1637.

De Shakespeare nostrat.—I remember the
 players have often mentioned it as an honour
 to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever
 he penn'd, hee never blotted out a line. My
 answer hath beene, 'Would he had blotted a
 thousand,'—which they thought a malevolent
 speech. I had not told posterity this but for
 their ignorance who choose that circumstance
 to commend their friend by wherein he most
 faulted; and to justifie mine owne candor, for I

lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory, on this side idolatry as much as any. Hee was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantsie, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein hee flow'd with that facility that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd;—*Sufflamandus erat*, as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too! Many times hee fell into those things, could not escape laughter; as when hee said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him,—‘Cæsar thou dost me wrong’; hee replyed,—‘Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause’; and such like; which were ridiculous. But hee redeemed his vices with his vertues. There was ever more in him to be prayd than to be pardoned.

1646.
November 4.

Burial, “Joan Hart, widow.”

1647.
April 5.

Burial, “Thomas Nash, gent.” His widow married John Barnard.

1649.
July 16.

Burial, “Susanna Hall, widow.”
The following inscription was engraved on her tombstone:—

Here lyeth ye body of Susanna, wife to John Hall, Gent., ye daughter of William Shakspeare, Gent. She deceased ye 11th of July, A.D. 1649, aged 66.

Witty above her sexe, but that's not all—
Wise to salvation was good Mistress Hall.
Something of Shakspeare was in that, but this
Wholy of Him with whom she's now in blisse.
Then, passenger, hast ne'ere a teare
To weepe with her, that wept with all!

That wept, yet set herself to chere
Them up with comfort's cordiall.
Her love shall live, her mercy spread
When thou hast ne'er a tear to shed.

1661-2. Burial, "Judith, uxor Thomas Quiney, gent."
February 9. She was Shakespeare's last surviving daughter.

1669-70. William Shakespeare's grand-daughter and
February 17. last lineal descendant, "Madam Elizabeth Bernard,
wife of Sir John Bernard, K^t", was buried
17 February 1669." Abingdon parish register.

X

**APPENDIX OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS
WITH NOTES**

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I

NOTE BY JOHN AUBREY

FROM *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, edited by Dr. Andrew Clark, i. 204.

"Sir William Davenant (1605-6—1668).

* Sir William Davenant, Knight, Poet Laureate, was borne [about* the end of February—vide A. Wood's *Antiq. Oxon.*—baptized 3 of March A.D. 1605-6] in . . . street in the city of Oxford at the Crowne tavernne. His father was John Davenant, a vintner there, a very grave and discreet citizen: his mother was a very beautifull woman, and of a very good witt, and of conversation extremely agreeable. . . . Mr. William Shakespeare was wont to goe into Warwickshire once a yeare, and did commonly in his journey lye at this house in Oxon where he was exceedingly respected. . . . Now Sir William would sometimes, when he was pleasant over a glasse of wine with his most intimate friends—e.g. Sam Butler (author of *Hudibras*), &c.—say, that it seemed to him that he writt with the very spirit that Shakespeare, and seemed contented^b enough to be thought his son."

* MS. Aubr. 6 fol. 46.

* The words here put in square brackets are a later insertion: the first clause is scored out.

^b "Contentended" in MS.

NOTE BY WILLIAM OLDYS (1696-1761)

In a copy of Gerard Langbaine's *Account of the English Dramatic Poets*, 1691 (British Museum, c. 28. g. 1), the

following is written between the printed lines at the top of page 456:—

“His poem called *Lover's Affection*¹ seems to be written to his beautiful wife under some Rumour of Inconstancy.”

There are no grounds for the supposition that Shakespeare's wife is alluded to in these Sonnets.

NOTE BY MANNINGHAM

From the *Diary of John Manningham* of the Middle Temple.² Edited by John Bruce and presented to the Camden Society by William Tite. Page 39. The diary is in the British Museum. H l. 5353 (4).

“Upon a tyme when Burbidge played Richard III, there was a citizen grone soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play shee appointed him to come that night unto hir by the name of Richard the Third. Shakespeare overhearing their conclusion went before, was intertained . . . ere Burbidge came. Then message being brought that Richard the Third was at the dore, Shakespeare caused returne to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third. Shakespeare's name was William. (Mr. Touse?).”

¹ The Sonnets now numbered 92 to 95 are printed in the 1640 edition under the title of “A Lover's Affection though his Love prove Unconstant.”

² Manningham entered as a student in March 1597-8. He died in 1622.

II

DE QUINCEY'S COMMENTS

AMONG the subjects discussed by De Quincey are Anne Hathaway's seniority to her husband and the early birth of their first child: "But in this case there seems to have been something more in motion than passion or the ardour of youth. . . . 'I like not,' says Parson Evans (alluding to Falstaff in masquerade), 'I like not when a woman has a great peard: I spy a great peard under her muffler.'¹ Neither do we like the spectacle of a mature young woman, five years past her majority, wearing the semblance of having been led astray by a boy who had still two years and a half to run of his minority."² The only known proof of the statement that Shakespeare's wife was his senior by about eight years is the following inscription on a brass plate affixed to her tombstone in the church at Stratford-upon Avon:—

"Here lyeth interred the body of Anne wife
of William Shakespeare who deſe'd this life the
6th day of Augu. 1623. Being of the age of 67 yeares."

Tombstone inscriptions are not always trustworthy records,³ and that recording Anne Shakespeare's age can hardly be admitted as evidence sufficiently conclusive to bear the weight of the many assumptions based upon the disparity it indicates. If the manuscript used by the engraver had been the

¹ *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iv. 2.

² *Shakespeare, A Biography*, p. 45. In justice to De Quincey it should be stated that the biography, which was written in 1838, "had not the benefit of any revision before his lamented death in 1889." Note in the 1864 edition.

³ Malone calls attention to errors on tombstones, and instances Lady Lucy's epitaph. *The Life of William Shakespeare*, 1821, note on p. 124. Halliwell-Phillipps cites the substitution of the numeral two for eleven in the inscription on Mrs. Hall's tombstone in the church at Stratford-upon-Avon: "The inscription here referred to having been tampered with in modern times." *Outlines*, ii. 323, note 180.

work of one of the inferior scribes of those times, the substitution of the numeral 7 for a badly formed 1 would be within the bounds of possibility. The absence of any confirmation of the age justifies some caution in accepting conclusions based upon data so notorious for error.

In commenting upon the birth of Shakespeare's daughter Susanna "six months short by one week" from the supposed date of the marriage, De Quincey states that it was barely possible for the marriage to have been solemnized before December 1st.¹ As an explanation intended to free the poet and his wife from the implied reproach in this matter, reliance is sometimes placed upon the fairly well ascertained though remote possibility that the short period between the dates of the marriage licence, November 27th, and Susanna's baptism, May 26th, was sufficient to ensure viability. Cases cited by experts support this contention,² and those who wish to make the best of the evidence may also claim that Shakespeare might have been married at Worcester on the date of the licence, and that, with an interval of four days between the birth and the christening, the remaining period of 175 days—six lunar months and one week—is well beyond the minimum mentioned by authorities in the Jardine case quoted by Guy and Ferrier. In connection with this branch of the subject, but with little bearing upon Shakespeare's case, it may be mentioned that in some of the Worcester licence bonds a description of the bride as "singlewoman" implies a knowledge of certain conditions which rendered the term more appropriate than that of "maiden" as usually applied. The instances are few, and the significance of the term is shown by its occurrence in one of the London marriage allegations, in which the word "singlewoman" is substituted for the cancelled word "maiden," an explanation of the reason for the change being also given.³

¹ *Shakespeare, A Biography*, p. 48.

² Guy and Ferrier, *The Principles of Forensic Medicine*. Revised by Wm. R. Smith, 1895, pp. 162-9. The matter is dealt with also by Halliwell-Phillips in *Outlines*, ii. 356, note 275.

³ No. 1 *Allegation Book*. London Diocesan Registry, December 18th, 1598.

III

SUPPOSED PERSONAL ALLUSIONS

ALLUSIONS to Shakespeare's personal experiences are supposed to be found in the following passages :—

THE TEMPEST, iv. 1. "If thou dost break."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, ii. 3. "War is no strife."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE, i. 3. "Upon a true contract."

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, i. 1. "Or else misgraffed in respect of years."

TWELFTH NIGHT, ii. 4. "Too old by heaven. . . . Then let thy love."

COMEDY OF ERRORS, v. 1. "The venom clamours."

THE WINTER'S TALE, i. 2. "As rank as any flax-wench."

IV

MARRIAGE CONTRACTS OR ESPOUSALS

THE suit of William Holder of Fulbrook against Alice Shaw of Hatton for the completion of an alleged contract of marriage was heard in the Consistory Court at Worcester on various dates between October 1585 and June 1586.¹ A "diffinitive sentence" was read in the court in February 1586-7, and the last reference in the Act Book, dated June 16th, states that the defendant was then contumacious after excommunication for forty days.² In the deposition given below, dated December 7th, 1585, Thomas Graunt of Wallhouse in the county of Worcester, Gentleman, described the circumstances under which the alleged contract was made.

"Upon the Sunday next before the feast of St. Mathewe last past this deponent came unto the house of one Thomas Bree of the parish of Hatton, father in lawe to the said Alice Shawe, of intent to have had some conference as well with the said Bree as with the said Alice, concerninge the concluding of a marriage between the said parties articulate, and fynding the said Thomas Bree from home, and the said Alice conformable and willing to acknowledg herself to be the wief of the sayd Wm. Holder, this deponent walking forth with the said Alice Shaw in the backside of the said Thomas Bree his said house. And upon examination of bothe parties, finding them both willing to be contracted, this deponent said, Alice, are you contented to be this man his wief (meaning the said

¹ *Deposition Book* No. 3 and *Act Book* No. 4, Worcester Diocesan Registry.

² The results of persistent contumacy are described in this Appendix, No. V. It is probable that imprisonment followed in this case.

Holder) and she sayd I am, and agayne saying unto her the said Alice, are you content to geve this man your faith and trothe, and she answered I am, and also asking her whether she was content to forsake all other men and to betake her self unto him onely as unto her husband, and she did make answer with theis wordes, viz., I am content, whereupon this deponent replyed and sayd, Alice, then this it is, you do here willingly acknowledge this man to be your husband and your self to be his wief, and she answered, I doe, and said againe unto her, yow do also confesse that you have hereupon given him your faith and your trothe, and she made answer I doe, you do likewise confesse (said this jurat unto her) that you are content to forsake all other men and betake yourself unto him onely, as to your husband, and she answered, I do confess it. Then this deponent said unto her, in pledge and token thereof geve him your hand, which she did, and that then and there the said Holder, mutatis mutandis, did contract and give his faith and his trothe unto the said Alice, as her husband, as in effect she the said Alice had done to him as his wief and so leused handes and kissed together in the presence of this deponent. . . . That this deponent after this contract soe passed between the said parties, did send them the said Holder and Alice into her father in lawes said house, there to acknowledge and confesse the said contract so had and made between them as is before said, before one Raphe Willis and John Maydes, who were then in the said house, and before whom this deponent thinketh the said contract was acknowledged, but he further saieth, that he this deponent coming afterwards into the said house amonges them, said amongst other things, unto the said Alice, I hope you do remember what you have done, and she said, yea very well, then said this deponent, you have acknowledged your self to be this man's wief, I have so sir said she, and this deponent said againe, yea, you have not only contented your self to be his wief but also you do here acknowledge before all theis, that you are his wief, and she said I doe, and doe and will forsake all other men for him and thereupon the said William Holder and she the said Alice kissed

together in the presence of this deponent and the afore-named Raphe Willis and John Maides."¹

Randolph Willis and John Maydes corroborated portions of Graunt's statement, but the relatives of neither Holder nor Shaw appear to have been called upon for evidence. The words "husband"² and "wife" indicate the nature of the contract to which the parties were binding themselves: it was a contract "by words of the present time,"—in fact a legal marriage.

Informal contracts were sometimes made when parents had not succeeded in arranging the terms upon which their children were to be espoused. The case of Henry Nicolson against Elizabeth Fisher, before the Worcester court for several months during the years 1584 and 1585,³ affords an example of the quaint methods of the betrothal of an impatient couple after their friends had met to discuss a projected marriage and failed to agree.

On July 9th, 1584, John Woodward of the city of Gloucester, Broadweaver, deposed "That aboute a fortnight before Christmas last past the certen day otherwise he remembreth not this jurat and one John Balie were at one Andrew's howse at Beckford in the countie of Gloucester brother in law to the said Elizabeth Fisher. And one the backside of the same howse this jurat and the said John Bailie sent for the said Elizabeth Fisher to come and talke with them. Upon hir cominge unto them this jurat examined hir what good likinge there was betwene Henry Nicolson and hir, who answered verie good likinge, for I have had divers suitors which sought my good will, yet I never liked of any one so well as of him, and if I had five hundred pounds I could finde in my hart to make him master of hit. And further this jurat demanded of hir whether she did thinke in hir conscience if Henry Nicolson and she were man and wife before God or not who answered by hir faith and truthe she verily believid hit in hir conscience, herupon this examinat

¹ *Deposition Book No. 3, Worcester Diocesan Registry.*

² "He is your husband on a pre-contract," *Measure for Measure*, iv. 1.

³ *Deposition Book No. 3 and Act Book No. 4, Worcester Diocesan Registry.*

axed hir whether she could willingly wishe that the sayd Henry Nicolson and she might be betrothed and contracted the one to the other and she answered willingly, this deponent wishing her to take heed that she did it willingly of hir owne consent without any procurement, and so willed them bothe to take hands, who so did, this jurat using these words. Henry will you take this woman to your wife forsaking all other, and he answered yea by his truthe, and after this jurat used the like words to the sayd Elizabeth, *mutatis mutandis* who answered that for his sake she was content to forsake all other and to him to give hir faith and truthe, and so losed their hands and kissed together."

Elizabeth Fisher, in her deposition, dated July 25th, 1584, stated that the promise was made upon the condition that "hir frends wold yeld their consent thereto and that he had lyvinge to maintaine them." She also said that she "had certain handecarches of the said Henry Nicolson which she delivered againe¹ and likewise the said Henrie had some of this examinat which are not delivered againe saving one in signe and token of good will betwene them."

Another witness, Edmund Andrews of Beckford deposed "That there were divers of the friends as well of the said Henry Nicolson as Elizabeth Fisher mett and assembled together at this deponent's howse the same day which the supposed contract was made to have some speches of marriage² and of certain conditions towching the same, but no contract at that tyme was maide betwene the parties unlesse it were privatlye whereunto none of the friends of the sayd Elizabeth Fisher were privie or consenting unto."³

According to another deposition the friends of the parties who failed to arrange the terms of marriage on the first occasion were Henry Nicolson, father of the plaintiff, William

¹ *Ophelia*. My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Hamlet, iii. 1.

² *Angelo*. "There was some speech of marriage."—*Measure for Measure*, v. 1.

³ *Deposition Book* No. 8, Worcester Diocesan Registry.

Turbill, Edmund Andrews, Thomas Fisher, Edmund George, John Balies, John Woodward, and one Tailor. A more successful attempt to arrange the terms seems to have been made by the friends after the alleged contract. The suit was decided in Nicolson's favour, and Elizabeth Fisher was excommunicated for refusing to obey the order of the Court.

The result of one of these matrimonial suits appears in a London allegation dated November 25th, 1598, on which day John Kidder of St. Martin's in the Vintry, London, "Weaver, a Widower aged about 35 years," applied for a licence and alleged "that he intendeth to marry one Catherine Draycott Maiden of the Parishe of St. James Garlick Hithe aged about 21 years the naturall daughter of John Draycott while he lived of St. Michael's Queenhithe Baker deceased and he further allegeth that he hath commenced a suite in the Court of Audience against the said Catherine Draycott uppon a contract of marriage and hath had a sentence deffinitive passed on his side in the said Court, wherein she is adjudged to be his lawfull wyfe. Then likewise appered personally Elizabeth Bland Widow the natural mother of the said Catherin and acknowledged the premisses before alleged to be true and likewise testified her consent."¹

Reynolds, in his *Constitutions*,² says: "And let priests often forbid such as are disposed to marry to plight their troth anywhere but in some notable place before [priests or] public persons called together for this purpose under pain of excommunication." To this Johnson adds the following note: "Priests are not mentioned by Lyndwood. A contract *in præsenti* was absolutely obliging, as it still is, if made before any two good witnesses, and Lyndwood by 'public persons' understands two such witnesses in any public place. Yet the contract or espousals were regularly to be first made, or however before solemnization renewed, before the priest; and there was an office for the purpose. Our espousals and

¹ *Allegation Book No. 1*, London Diocesan Registry.

² Dated about 1322.

solemnization are now put in one office.”¹ An acknowledgment of these contracts appears in the Injunctions of King Edward VI., 1547: “Item, Whether you know any to have made privy contracts of matrimony, not calling two or more thereunto.”²

There has been much controversy on questions relating to legitimacy and dower in the case of irregular marriages, but there can be no doubt that, if Shakespeare entered into a contract of marriage *per verba præsenti* or cohabited after a contract *per verba futuro*, he could have been ordered by the Ecclesiastical Court to proceed to solemnization even after a subsequent marriage with another.³ This second marriage would also have been void at Common Law by sentence of the aforesaid Court. The difference between the Canon and Civil Law on this subject is shown in the following extracts:—

“A contract made *per verba præsenti*, or *per verba de futuro* followed by cohabitation, between persons able to contract, was deemed a valid marriage and equally binding as if made *in facie ecclesiæ*; it was indissoluble, and either party might in the spiritual court compel the other to solemnize the marriage ecclesiastically. . . . Nevertheless it was decided by the House of Lords in the case of *Reg. v. Millis*, 10 *Cl. & F.*, 534, that there could not have been a valid marriage before the Reformation without the presence of a priest ecclesiastically ordained, or afterwards without the presence of a priest or deacon.”⁴

“There are three distinct points as to legitimacy on which the Canon Law was not accepted or recognized by the law of England:—First, that by the law of England, a ceremony before a priest was necessary to the validity of the marriage in order that the wife might have dower of her husband's land and the children be heirs; whereas by the Pre-Tridentine

¹ *A Collection of the Laws and Canons of the Church of England*, 1851, ii. 340.

² Cardwell, *Synodalia*, i. 51.

³ The Revd. H. S. Bowden says: “Shakespeare in Fenton's defence of Anne Page's clandestine marriage lays down accurately the Catholic doctrine on the subject.” *The Religion of Shakespeare*, p. 258. See *Merry Wives of Windsor*, v. 5.

⁴ J. T. Hammick, *The Marriage Laws of England*, 1887, p. 5.

Canon Law which still prevails, where the decrees of the Council of Trent are not published, simple consent of the parties, exchanged secretly and without any ceremony, either *per verba præsenti* or *per verba futuro subsequente copulâ* without more constituted marriage. Secondly, the issue of a void marriage contracted *bonâ fide*; and thirdly, the issue of persons who subsequently to the birth of issue intermarry are legitimate by the Canon Law, but bastards by the Common Law.”¹

¹ W. Nevill Geary, *The Law of Marriage and Family Relations*, p. 3.

V

EXCOMMUNICATION AND OTHER PENALTIES

THE following description of the proceedings upon the refusal of one of the parties to carry out a contract of marriage is taken from *A Treatise of Espousals or Matrimonial Contracts*, by Henry Swinburne, 1686, page 231: "By Laws Ecclesiastical of this Realm, if any having contracted spousals and being convented and adjudged to celibrate matrimony accordingly, do refuse to undergo the Execution of the Sentence pronounced by the ecclesiastical judge, he or she so refusing may for his contumacy or disobedience therein be excommunicated. And if the party do still persevere in that state by the space of 40 days the ordinary may by a Significavit or Certificate under his Seal certify unto the Chancery the contempt of the party and craving the aid of the Secular power. Whereupon a writ *de Excommunicatio Capiendo* is to be directed to the Sheriff for the apprehension of the body of the same party excommunicated who being apprehended by virtue thereof is to be kept in prison, without bail or mainprise, until he or she have humbled themselves and obeyed the Monition of the Ordinary, which when it is done and the Church and party both satisfied, then is the Ordinary to absolve the party and to certify the same to the said Chancery. Whereupon a writ is to be directed as before for the release of the parties imprisonment, which writ is called *Breve de Excommunicatio deliberando*. To this punishment are they subject which have contracted spousals *de presenti* and afterwards refuse to undergo the holy bond of matrimony."

VI

SHAKESPEARE AND WHITGIFT

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S marriage licence is not the only document in which Whitgift, in his official capacity, is named in connection with the poet's affairs. As Archbishop of Canterbury he was authorized to license books and pamphlets under the injunctions issued by Queen Elizabeth on coming to the throne. After his translation from Worcester to Canterbury in 1583, Whitgift sent out certain Articles, including one "against printing and publishing of books and pamphlets without licence of the Archbishop or Bishop."¹ In 1593 Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, which was published by Richard Field, a Stratford man, was licensed by the Archbishop and entered in the Stationers' Register. Fo. 297b:—

| RICHARD FFEILD | xviii Aprilis |
|---|--|
| Assigned over to master Harrison senior 25 Junij 1594. | Entred for his copie under th[e h]andes of the Archbisshop of Canterbury and master warden Stirrop, a booke intituled Venus and Adonis. vj ^d s. ² |

It is not known in what form the licence was given, as the original document has not been preserved; but it must have been signed by the Archbishop. That Whitgift probably made himself acquainted with the nature of the poem dedicated to Lord Southampton is indicated by his close personal

¹ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 232.

² Dr. Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers, London*, ii. 630.

oversight of books and pamphlets entered with the Stationers' Company. In the Warden's accounts for the year ended July 10th, 1587, appears a sum of xii^s "layde out in charges to procure a copie for my Lord of Canterburye of a popishe booke which was in pryntinge." "Item paid for goinge and comminge by water to Lambeth iij severall tymes and for other busynes about the Cumpanyes affayres at that time—iii^s v^d." Accounts for the year ended 10 July 1588. To this entry Dr. Arber appends a note: "This and other like entries show that Archbishop Whitgift kept the officers of the Company pretty busy at work." "Item paid in search at Billingsgate iij dayes for bookes that came out of Scotland beinge ij barrelles and ij fyrkins delivered to my lordes grace (of Canterbury) xj^s viij^d." Accounts for year ended 10 July 1594.¹

¹ Dr. Arber's *Transcript*, i. pp. 520, 526, and 567.

VII

THE SHAXPERE-WHATELEY ENTRY

THE register in which is entered the well-known record of the grant of a licence for the marriage of "W^m Shaxpere et Anna Whateley de Temple Grafton" is one of a series of folio volumes commencing in 1268 with that of Godfrey de Giffard and continuing with but little interruption until the present day. These registers contain the official acts of the bishops of Worcester, such as dedications of abbeys, elections of abbots, consecrations of churches, ordinations, visitations, institutions, copies of papal bulls and other communications, and licences to serve cures, to teach, and to eat flesh during Lent.¹

The Manor of Stratford belonged to the bishops until 1549, when it came into the possession of John Dudley Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, in exchange for lands in Worcestershire.² Among the early references in the episcopal registers to this connection between the bishops and the town are the following:—"1281. Mandate to the deans of Stratford, Warwick, Hampton, Blockley and Stowe to pronounce sentence of the greater excommunication against those who trespass in the bishop's park at Stratford." In 1285 the bishop was summoned to "answer the King by what warrant he claims to have a market and free warren at Stratford."³ Other matters of historical interest include the copy of a letter, dated October 20th, 1356, from Edward the Black

¹ The particulars of a licence to teach in the Grammar-School at Stratford-upon-Avon are given at p. 108.

² E. B. Wheler, *History and Antiquities of Stratford-upon-Avon*, p. 13.

³ *The Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard*. Edited by J. Willis-Band, pp. 133 and 253.

Prince at Bordeaux to his friend Bishop Reginald Brian, giving an account of those who were taken at the battle of Poitiers.¹ This letter was received at Alvechurch on December 1st, 1356. At the end of register No. XXXIII. are copies of letters from Charles 1st to Bishop Prideaux at the commencement of the Rebellion. The king enjoins vigilance in the pastoral charge and asks for contributions, to be repaid with interest at 8 per cent. "as soon as theise distractions shall be somewhat appeased."

The "Shaxpere-Whateley" entry, to which public attention was first called some years ago by the Revd. T. P. Wadley, occurs on folio 43*b* of volume No. XXXII., in a list of licences granted between April 1579 and March 1585, after which date no further matrimonial entries were made in the bishop's registers. The list of licences is interrupted by ordination lists and a "sentence" from folios 44*a* to 50*b* inclusive.

¹ Register, No. XL, folio 118*b*.

VIII

THE MARRIAGE LICENCE BOND

THE bond signed by Sandells and Richardson on the issue of Shakespeare's marriage licence was discovered in 1836 by the late Sir Thomas Phillipps in a bundle of wills, inventories, and administration bonds, which he was calendaring at the Worcester Diocesan Registry. The bond is written in the ordinary running hand of the period on an oblong sheet of vellum, a narrow strip at the lower right hand corner having been cut and knotted for the reception of the wax upon which the seals were impressed. In 1841 the bond was taken from the file for the convenience of the many who desired to inspect it. Four other bonds were also removed and improperly placed with some marriage licence documents, of various dates from 1601 to 1611, which are still kept in the old will room on the north side of Edgar Tower. The bundles of wills with which the greater part of the marriage licence bonds are filed were transferred to the new registry when the Probate Act came into operation in 1858.

The double thong of white leather upon which the documents were filed was unbroken when the Shakespeare bond was discovered, and no doubt can be reasonably entertained as to its genuineness. Any suspicion suggested by the Ireland or other forgeries and substitutions of documents relating to the poet¹ will be removed by a comparison of the bond with those of the same period; and, further, the issue of a licence to Shakespeare at that time is placed beyond dispute by the bishop's register record, which was not known to be in existence when the bond was found. It may also be as well to state

¹ For an account of these and other forgeries, see Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, pp. 365-9.

that the bond was removed from its original position by the deputy registrar, who replaced it by the following memorandum: "Bond given by Shakespeare's sureties on his obtaining a marriage licence 28 Nov^r, 25th y^r of Elizabeth, taken from this bundle and placed in Mr. Henry Clifton's drawer in the South chamber of Edgar Tower, 13th August, 1841. H. Clifton."

The writing of the bond was quite clear until 1885, when it was enclosed in glass and framed; but some of the words are now scarcely legible. This change, as well as an increase of half an inch in length and a slight narrowing, is probably due to the process of cementing the vellum on the glass.

For these reasons I have obtained the permission of Messrs. Thomas Bennett and Sons of Worcester to reproduce a photograph of the bond taken by them in June 1882, instead of using a print from a recent negative in which some of the above defects are too apparent.

The earliest of the Worcester bonds is dated 1552, but licences of earlier date are recorded in the bishops' registers. Many of the bonds for subsequent grants are missing; for instance, no bond has yet been found for the licence issued on December 11th, 1573, for the marriage of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, and Dorothy Arnold.

The marriage licence bonds at Worcester usually show no signs of having been folded; but some which appear to have been signed away from the registry are marked with creases as though they had been so treated. The Shakespeare bond, which by its shape is ill suited for the purpose of transmission without being folded or rolled, is marked with three of such creases, but it is not known whether this was done after removal from the file of wills.

SHAKESPEARE'S LICENCE BOND

Noverint universi per presentes nos Fulconem Sandells de Stratford in comitatu Warwici agricolam et Johannem Rychardson ibidem agricolam teneri et firmiter obligari

Ricardo Cosin generoso et Roberto Warmstry notario publico in quadraginta libris bone et legalis monete Anglie solvendis eisdem Ricardo et Roberto heredibus executoribus vel assignatis suis ad quam quidemolucionem bene et fideliter faciendam obligamus nos et utrumque nostrum per se pro toto et in solidum heredes executores et administratores nostros firmiter per presentes sigillis nostris sigillatas. Datum 28 die Novembris anno regni domine nostre Elizabethe Dei gratia Anglie Francie et Hibernie regine fidei defensoris &c. 25°.

The condicion of this obligacion ys suche that if hereafter there shall not appere any lawfull lett or impediment by reason of any precontract consanguintie affinitie or by any other lawfull meanes whatsoever but that William Shagspere one th'one partie, and Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the Dioces of Worcester maiden may lawfully solemnize matrimony together and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wiffe according unto the lawes in that behalf provided and moreover if there be not at this present time any action sute quarrell or demaund moved or depending before any judge ecclesiasticall or temporall for and concerning any suche lawfull lett or impediment. And moreover if the said William Shagspere do not proceed to solemnizacion of mariadg with the said Anne Hathwey without the consent of hir frindes. And also if the said William do upon his owne proper costes and expenses defend & save harmles the right Reverend father in God Lord John bushop of Worcester and his offycers for licencing them the said William and Anne to be married together with once asking of the bannes of matrimony betwene them and for all other causes which may ensue by reason or occasion thereof that then the said obligacion to be voyd and of none effect or els to stand & abide in full force and vertue.

IX

BANNS OF MARRIAGE

VARIOUS conditions as to banns were inserted in the Worcester marriage licences. In the Throgmorton-Sutton licence, previously referred to, publication is altogether dispensed with—the only instance I have found in the registers. In many of the older licences one proclamation, sometimes at the door of the church at the time of the marriage, is ordered, and this appears to have been the usual practice. In some cases the day before the ceremony is named for the banns, while in another they are to be “twyst lawfully first asked and proclaymed.” Other variations give “once in the accustomed manner;” once in the parish of each of the parties before the day of solemnization; or “only in one of the parishes where the said parties abide at this presente.” In other cases the banns are to be fully published, or “according to the sacred canon,” or on any Sunday, Saint’s day, or Festival ~~before the~~ ceremony.

In marriages without licence the law as to the full publication of banns was considered to be complied with if they were proclaimed on three separate Sundays or Holy-days.

X

MARRIAGE OF MINISTERS

IN Queen Elizabeth's Injunctions of 1559, No. xxix., it is stated that certain rules had become necessary "because there hath grown offence and some slander to the church by lack of discreet and sober behaviour in many ministers of the church both in choosing of their wives and indiscreet living with them." The following example of the remedy which was applied, interesting on account of the signature of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charelcote, is addressed to the registrar of the diocese, Robert Warmstry :—

Whereas yt is set downe by the Quenes Majesties Injunctions that no mynister shall take to his wyfe, any manner of woman without certyfyinge the Bysshoppe or his deputie, „ Justices of the Peace of the same shyre, dwellinge next to the place wheare the same woman hathe made hir most abydinge before hir marriage. Theese are to certyfie you that Jone Hytchcoke hathe dwellyd in Charlcott these fowre yeares last past, duringe wch tyme wee coulde never knowe, nor heare, but that hir conversation of lyvinge hathe bine honest and good. In wytnes whearof wee have subscribed our names the xvth of this instant of September anno dni 1583.

Your frindes—Thomas Lucy
Humphrey Peyto.

A licence was probably granted in all such cases in token of the bishop's approval. At the foot of a certificate as to the

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"proper living" of Ellen Pirton, one of the few documents of this kind which have been preserved at Worcester, the bishop signifies his consent to her marriage with Richard Stone, Parson of Redmarley D'Abitot, and adds: "he is desyrouse to be married at Poyck or within the denerye thereof which I am contented he shall doe."¹

¹ The certificate and a bond dated May 2nd, 29 Elizabeth, are in the bundle of Wills and Bonds for the year 1587. Worcester Probate Registry.

XI

THE RECORDS OF THE CONSISTORY COURT

THE Act and Deposition books are records of the proceedings of the Worcester Consistory Court, which was formerly held at the Western end of the South aisle of the Cathedral. In Shakespeare's day Dr. Cosin was the Judge, and the matters submitted to his decision included testamentary, matrimonial, tithe, and defamation cases, the depositions containing much interesting matter relating to the counties of Warwick and Worcester, with many references to names of persons and places well known in connection with the Shakespeare families.¹ In this court Mrs. Hall, the poet's elder daughter, proceeded against John Lane, Junr., for defamation, and a minute in the *Act Book* No. 9 records Lane's excommunication.² The Visitation books contain the records of less serious matters presented to the Vicar General or his deputy. "Whereas by the ancient custom, the said Archdeacons or their Officials should visit, or keep their Courts, or Generals, as they call them, but twice every year, viz., at Easter and Michaelmas. At which times they did in times past punish matters of less importance (then detected) by their own authority. And such causes as were of greater weight, they did make known to the Bishop or his Vicar General. Who thereupon did call the said offenders to the Bishop's Consistory (kept ever in one settled place,) there to be censured. Or else the Vicar General did twice

¹ The Consistory Court is now held at irregular intervals in the Chapter House, but these matters are not now within its jurisdiction.

² For an account of this case, see *Outlines*, i. 242.

every year in proper person ride into the Archdeaconry. Or in his absence did then depute one grave Minister or more (who were called *correctores morum*, &c.) for the hearing and determining of the same offences there presented. Who did render account of such his doings unto the Bishop, or to the Vicar General."¹ The entries in the Visitation books mainly refer to citations for such offences as teaching without licence,² sowing discord betwixt neighbours, "detect for a scoulde," working on Festival days, playing "foteball" in prayer time, clandestine marriage, playing a fiddle on Low Sunday, and living from a wife. In 1615 Richard Castle of Stratford and his wife were cited "for being married by Mr. Ward contrary to the order of the Book of Common Prayer," the irregularity being the omission of the ring. The complaint against Thomas Quynney and his wife, Shakespeare's younger daughter, for marrying without licence³ is entered in the book from which the above examples are taken.

The series of Visitation Books is not complete, the volume covering the period of Shakespeare's early life having been lost, together, no doubt, with many references to Stratford people and their offences against the Church laws, and other information illustrative of old manners and customs.⁴

To the fortunate circumstance that the sixteenth century marriage licence bonds were considered of sufficient importance to be filed with the wills we owe the preservation of one of the most valuable of Shakespearean relics from the fate of very many of the records of what must have been a busy registry in Elizabethan times. Some idea of the mass of papers which was then accumulated may be formed from one part of the business despatched on November 27th, 1582, the date of Shakespeare's licence. In addition to the ordinary probate, licence, and other business, the Act Book records the minutes

¹ Styrpe, *Life of Whitgift*, iii. 375.

² On June 14th, 1616, Richard Hunt of Stratford-upon-Avon was cited for teaching without licence.

³ See p. 67.

⁴ For an allusion to Shakespeare found in a manuscript book of precedents, etc., see this Appendix, No. XL.

of forty cases which were dealt with by the Chancellor, Dr. Cosin, at the Consistory Court held on that day, and the deposition book contains the evidence of several witnesses in the suits then pending.

The loss of a part of the documents accumulated for many centuries at the diocesan registry may well be due to accident, for Worcester sustained considerable injury during the siege of 1642, when the city and cathedral were pillaged by the victorious Parliamentary forces. An item in the accounts of the Dean and Chapter states that the sum of 4s. 4d. was paid "To the mason for tyles, lyme and work done, in reparation of Mr. Organist's house ruined by a canon shott when Waller attempted the taking of the city."¹ After the siege of 1646 the cathedral was damaged, and some of the adjacent buildings were destroyed. In the hurried removal of the contents of the muniment rooms, when their safety became threatened, the wills and bound volumes would be first cared for;² but many books as well as loose papers, including the earlier marriage licence allegations, may have been destroyed or lost during the first years of the Commonwealth.³ The surviving records were, however, in safe keeping during the occupation of the city by Cromwell's army after the battle of Worcester on September 3rd, 1651. Considering the liability at such times to damage by damp, the documents at this registry are in a good state of preservation, and only a few show signs of having suffered from that cause. The destruction of old documents may, in some cases, have been caused by the necessity of making room for the new. The removals, sometimes to less spacious premises, which the offices of the Worcester Registry are known to have experienced since the Reformation would be likely occasions for the destruction of such papers as were considered to be of little value, and the fact that one of them bore the name of Shakespeare would not, until late in the

¹ John Noake, *The Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester*, p. 562.

² Many similar documents were, no doubt, destroyed with old St. Paul's during the great fire of London.

³ At some of the diocesan registries various series of books and papers commenced on the return of the bishops at the Restoration.

eighteenth century, have saved it from the common fate. The loss of many records was, no doubt, due to preventable causes. The personal interest of the officials in the historical treasures in their charge has of late years contributed to a better appreciation of their value.

The records now at Edgar Tower, with the exception of a few of little historical value, are well arranged and cared for. The only urgent need is protection from fire, and it may be hoped that for this some provision will be made during the present restoration of the building.

XII

MARRIAGE LICENCES OR DISPENSATIONS

THE oldest records of licences or dispensations granted for marriages in England are "doubtless in the Vatican." Licences "are to be found of as early a date as the year 1300, in the library at Lambeth; and some as early as the twelfth century are in the British Museum." Sims, *Manual for the Genealogist*, pp. 362-3. The earliest licence recorded in the registers of the bishops of Worcester was granted on January 27th, 1446, to Richard Beauchamp, son of Sir John Beauchamp, and Elizabeth Stafford; the next is dated 1465,¹ and no other licence appears until 1530, during the episcopate of Jerome de Ghinucciis, the last of the four Italians who occupied the see from 1497 until the abolition of the Pope's authority over the church in England.² There can be no doubt, however, that many licences were granted between 1465 and 1530, and at earlier dates, which were not entered in the registers. After the Reformation the entries gradually become more numerous. Though alien bishops no longer augmented the revenues of the Church by the sale of indulgences and dispensations, the change was not productive of any reduction in the number of licences.

On the subject of the cost of licences at the date of the Shakespeare grant I have no definite information. In the

¹ Both of these licences were granted by Bishop Carpenter. Register, No. XXII., folios 47a and 188b.

² The ancient right of dispensation formerly held by the Pope in England was transferred to the archbishops and bishops by the Act 25 Hen. VIII., c. 21, s. 3.

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Articles agreed upon at a Convocation in 1575, a fee of 10s. is named for licences to marry without banns granted at the Archbishop's Faculty office for the provinces of Canterbury and York. In the table of fees payable to the officers of ecclesiastical courts issued by Archbishop Whitgift in 1597 the charges for the two kinds of licences are as follows:—

| | | s. | d. |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----|----|
| Licentia solemnizandi matrimonium | Judge | 6 | 8 |
| absque bannis | Register | 3 | 4 |
| Licentia solemnizandi matrimonium | Judge | 2 | 0 |
| tempore prohibito bannis editis | Register | 1 | 4 |

A fee of four pence was also payable to the Keeper of the seal.

Before the above table was issued a bill had been brought in "against excessive fees of ecclesiastical judges, and other officers and ministers; and delivered to Mr. Speaker,"¹ and it may be inferred that the cost of licences had previously been irregular and excessive. The social position of many of those to whom licences were granted in Whitgift's time points, however, to the conclusion that the cost, especially for marriages during the prohibited seasons, was moderate, and that the fee paid by Shakespeare would approximate to that named in the table of 1597, viz. 3s. 8d., which is a smaller sum relatively than the £2 15s. now charged at the Worcester Diocesan Registry.

Among the means used to effect irregular marriages the licence has played a prominent part.² In 1584 a "Book of Articles" was offered to Parliament, and it is stated in the thirteenth that "There is one facultie of great inconvenience granted not only by the court of Faculties, but by the chancellor of every diocese, viz., the dispensation for marriage without banns asking. By occasion whereof children make disordered matches without the assent of their parents and

¹ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, ii. 377.

² In addressing the bishops on these and other abuses in the church, Queen Elizabeth warned them in 1584 "That if they . . . did not amend she was minded to depose them." Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 393.

orphans are left to the spoil of unthrift persons." To this article the bishops made answer: "1. It may be so qualified that no inconvenience shall ensue thereof. 2. There be divers reasonable occasions, that daily happen which may hinder the thrice asking of banns; which causes are meet to be considered of and allowed by the Ordinary or his deputy. 3. The inconvenience that is proposed is in most dioceses already met withal, by putting these conditions in the faculty; viz. that they have their governor's consent; that there is no suit for matrimony depending; no pre-contract; nor any other impediment; which the party is by a bond with sureties bound unto. So that by this means, this inconvenience is better met withal, than by asking the banns thrice; which may be done, and yet these impediments remain. 4. And since the bonds have been qualified as is abovesaid, being about one twelve month past, experience doth teach, that none of the pretended inconveniences have happened."¹ In 1597 "Informations were also brought of some of these marriages by licence very incestuous and abominable: as of some marrying two sisters: another marrying his brother's wife, another marrying his own mother's sister; and another that married his own father's wife. Some married by a pretended minister without holy orders and by a parish clerk and fall by licences. . . . And because some in parliament had set so hard against licences to marry without banns; shewing the many mischiefs that had followed upon them, or at least upon the granting of them so hastily, and to any persons; and that therefore it were better that the bishops and their courts were wholly deprived of the power of granting them; (a thing that seemed to be aimed at)."²

The following is a note to an edition of the Canons of 1597: "But heavy complaints were still continued against its courts and the details of its government, and they acquired additional force at this period from some notorious instances of

¹ Dr. Wilkins, *Concilia*, pp. 309-14. No. 4 is probably a reference to Whitgift's Articles of September 1583. See Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 227.

² Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, ii. 381. "It is thought that this revenue is a profit to the church against the law of God. And is wished generally by the house [of Parliament] to be taken away." *Ibid.*, iii. 379.

abuse in marriage licences. . . . The Convocation determined to republish the Canons of 1585 with additional provisions, and a form of licence to be used in the case of a marriage without banns hoping that by these precautions they might be able to prevent any future scandals."¹ No effectual remedy, however, appears to have been applied to the abuses, for which the bishops were mainly to blame. Many of the Worcester bonds dated from 1599 to 1611 are unfinished, the first part having been generally completed, a blank space being left for the insertion of all or a part of the conditions. The small importance then attached to the bond, both by the officials and the sureties, is also indicated by the fact that in many cases the signatures appear on unfinished documents. In the year 1619, John Hoskin, one of the petty canons of Worcester cathedral, "was dismissed from the quier as having dishonoured the church by divers misdemeanours and clandestine marriages."²

The following is a copy of the deposition made on July 12th, 1582, by Robert Robinson, aged 44 years, Vicar of Grimley, in the suit of Thomas Winsore against Anne White alias Winsore, for the restitution of conjugal rights.³

"That aboute Michelmas come shalbe vi yeres upon a Saturday this jurat was sent for by Mr. Edmund Hall, Thomas Winsore, one White, and one Flavell, parties assemblid aboute a marriadge to ensue betwene the said Thomas Winsore and Anne White. And upon his cominge thither he was requestid to solemnize matrimony betwene the said Thomas Winsore and Anne White which by vertue of a lycence graunted to him he did accordingly in a chamber of the said Mr. Halle's howse within the parishe of Grimley usinge the due order and forme sett downe for marriadg in all points and bothe the said parties most willinge and consentinge thereunto in the presence of this jurat Mr. Edmund Hall and his wiffe, Richard Saunt, John Staunton, William Boundie, John White and one

¹ Cardwell, *Synodalia*, i. 147.

² John Noake, *Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester*, p. 549.

³ Worcester Consistory Court Act and Deposition Books for the years 1582 and 1583.

Flavell with Robert Rose. And further this jurat sayeth he was requestid to solemnize matrimony betwene them pryvatly in the said Mr. Hall's howse because the parties allegid that if it were knowen that the said Anne Whit weare married, divers wold sue hir for dett which hir former husband stodd indettid for which detts she might not so easely compound if it were known as she might otherwise."¹

Whether Robinson was suspended for performing the ceremony out of church does not appear in the records. That he did not escape punishment is, however, suggested by the fact that on June 5th, 1584, soon after the termination of the Winsor suit, one John Birch succeeded him as vicar of Grimley, the words in which the cause of a vacancy were almost invariably stated having been in this instance omitted from the record in the bishop's register.² During the vacancy of the see, the institution was effected at Lambeth by Archbishop Whitgift, who had recently been translated to Canterbury from Worcester.

¹ *Deposition Book* No. 3, Worcester Diocesan Registry.

² Register, No. XXXII., fo. 14b. The vacancy does not appear to have been caused by Robinson's death. I am informed that there is no entry of his burial at Grimley.

XIII

THE ANCIENT REGISTRY

THE building used as the Episcopal Registry at Worcester in Shakespeare's day has not, to my knowledge, been located. In 1465 Bishop Carpenter provided chambers for his registrar, and it is probable that these were in his palace, an ancient building on the North side of the cathedral, overlooking the river Severn.¹ At some unknown date after the Reformation it became customary for the registrar to provide offices at his private residence; and maps of various dates show that during the eighteenth century two houses in the College Green were successively used for this purpose. In 1817 the registrar's offices were in a one-story building which formerly stood at the south-east corner of Edgar Tower. The offices are now in the spacious rooms of this ancient gateway of the monastery, which forms an appropriate home for the episcopal as well as capitular records. For nearly a century after the appointment of William Warmstry as bishop's registrar in 1544, various members of the family held the office, and for a part of that time they resided in a house² on the North side of the bishop's palace. I have not been able to ascertain whether it was in the possession of the Warmstrys in 1582, when Robert, the official named in Shakespeare's licence bond, was registrar. It may, however, be assumed that, if the application for the licence was made in person, the parties attended either at the

¹ This palace has been occupied by the deans of Worcester since 1845, when the deanery, formerly the prior's house, was partly demolished.

² For a description of this house, see *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, May 25th, 1837, and *The Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1836, p. 14.

registrar's chambers in the episcopal palace or at the residence of Robert Warmstry.

In 1751 the Worcester Porcelain manufactory was established in the Warmstry mansion, and as late as 1838 portions of the old house were standing. The site is now occupied by Dent's Glove manufactory.

XIV

THE WHATELEY ERROR

THE whole of the entries in the lists of licences appear to have been written by the same scribe, probably a junior whose principal qualifications were neat penmanship and some knowledge of Latin, the language in which the bishop's registers are written. The numerous errors show that his work was not corrected, and some unfinished paragraphs indicate that the original documents from which he was transcribing had not been completed. For instance, an entry dated June 14th, 1581: "*Item 14 die eisdem mensis emanavit licencia solemnizandi matrimonium inter Johnem Wise de Halisowen,*" is followed by another also unfinished and evidently connected with it: "*Item eodem die similis emanavit licencia solemnizandi matrimonium inter Twise et famulam.*"¹ It would appear that in this case, the only one I have discovered in which an occupation is given in these entries, one of the parties was described as a servant, the English word probably having been used;² and, as the name of the bride is not given in either of the entries in the list, it is probable also that the original document was incomplete, and that the scribe did not observe this until he had made the second attempt to enter the particulars. The nature of these and other errors³ is against the theory that the lists were compiled from a draft, and the curious entries just described further indicate that the

¹ Register, No. XXXII., fo. 89b. Worcester Diocesan Registry.

² In the Court books the depositions of witnesses are written in the more familiar language.

³ For notes on other errors in the matrimonial entries, see this Appendix, No. XVI.

particulars were taken from an original document, probably an allegation, and that the statement of John Wise, the applicant for the licence, had not been cancelled. Examples of the kind are found in the London records.¹ Although it is not known whether Shakespeare or his friends applied for the licence at Worcester or at Stratford, it appears probable that the latter or some of them attended in person at the registry. In this case it is not difficult to account for the substitution of the name Whateley for that of Hathaway. Thus amongst other possible explanations it may be suggested that, when the poet's licence business had been despatched as far as feasible after the late arrival of the party from Stratford on the evening of that busy November day, the scribe, while making his neat entries of the day's licences, was interrupted by an enquiry from Parson Whateley as to some detail of his tithe-case which had been before the Consistory Court that afternoon. On continuing his work, the scribe with somewhat divided attention may have allowed the plaintiff's name, perhaps written by him more than once in connection with the case, to stray into his licence paragraph, with a result not a little perplexing to inquirers three centuries afterwards.

¹ See an instance described at p. 61.

XV

THE WILL OF RICHARD HATHAWAY

COPIED from a register at the Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House. Probate was granted to Joan Hathaway, the widow, at London, July 9th, 1582.

In the name of God, amen; the firste daie of September, in the yeare of oure Lorde God one thowsande fyve hundred eightie one, and in the three and twentithe yeare of thee raigne of oure soveraigne ladye Elizabeth by the grace of God queene of Englande Fraunce, and Irelande, defender of the faith etc. I, Richard Hathway of Shottree in the parrishe of Stratford-uppon-Avon in the countie of Warwicke husbandman, beinge sicke in bodye but of perfecte memorye, (I thancke my Lord God) doe ordaine and make this my last will and testamente in manner and forme followinge. Firste, I bequeathe my sowle unto allmightie God, trustinge to be saved by the merittes of Christes Passion, and my bodye to be buried in the churche or churche-yarde of Stratforde aforesaide. Item, I give and bequeathe unto Thomas my sonne sixe poundes thirtene shillinges fower pence, to be payde unto him at the age of twentie yeares. Item, I give and bequeathe unto John my sonne six poundes thirtene shillinges fower pence to be payde unto him at the age of twentie yeares. Item, I give and bequeathe unto William my sonne tenne poundes to bee payde unto him at the age of twentie yeares. Item, I give and bequeathe unto Agnes my daughter, sixe poundes thirtene shillinges fower pence to be payde unto her at the daie of her marriage. Item I give and bequeathe unto Catherine my daughter sixe poundes thirtene shillinges fower

pence to be paide unto her at the daie of her marriage. Item I give and bequeathe unto Margaret my daughter, sixe poundes thirtene shillings fower pence to be paide unto her at the age of seaventeene yeares. And if it fortune that any of my said sonnes or daughters before named, that is to saie, Thomas John William Agnes Catherine or Margarett to decease before theie receyve theire legacies, then my will is that the legacies of he or she so deceased to remayne equallie amonge the rest, and so unto the longest lyvers of theme. Item my will is (withe consente of Jone, my wife) that my eldiste sonne Barthellmewe shall have the use commoditie and profytt of one halfe yeard lande withe all pastures and meadowinge therto belonginge withe the appurtenaunces to be tilled mucked and sowed at the charges of Joane my wyffe he onelie findinge seede duringe the naturall life or widdowehode of the same Johan my wife to be severed from the other of my lande for his commoditie and profite. And my will is that he the same Bartholomewe shal be a guide to my saide wife in hir husbandrye. And also a comferte unto his bretherne and sisters to his power. Provided alwaies that if the saide Joane, my wife shall att anye tyme or tymes at—after my decease goe aboute to disanull or to take awaye from my saide sonne Bartholomewe the foresaide half yarde lande withe the appurtenaunces, so that he doe not enjoye the commoditie and profite of the same accordinge to the trewe meaninge of this my last will and testamente. Then my will is that the sayde Joane my wief shall gyve delyver and paye unto my saide sonne Bartholomewe within one yeare after any suche deniall or discharge the somme of fortie poundes of lawfull Englishe monneye. Item my will is that all the seelings in my hallhowse withe twoe joyned beddes in my parlor shall contynewe and stande unremoved duringe thee naturall liffe or widowhode of Jone my wyffe and the naturall lief of Bartholomewe my sonne and John my sonne, and the longest lyver of theme. Item, I gyve and bequeathe unto everie of my god childrenne fower pence a peece of theme. Item I gyve and bequeathe unto Agnes Hathway and Elizabethe Hathway daughters unto

Thomas Hathway a sheepe a-peece of theme. This bequeast donne, debts paide and legacies leaved, and my bodye honestlie buried, then I gyve and bequeathe all the rest of my goodes moveable and unmoveable unto Joane my wief whome I make my sole executrix to see this my last will and testament trulye performed. And I desier my trustie frende and neighbours Stephen Burman, and Fowlke Sandelles to be my supervisors of this my last will and testamente, and theie to have for their paynes therin to be taken twelve pence a peece of theme. Witnesses, sir William Gilbarde, clarke and curate in Stretforde, Richarde Burman, John Richardson, and John Hemynge withe others. Signum + Richardi Hathwaie testatoris.—Debtes to be paide. Inprimis I doe owe unto my neighbour, John Pace fortye shillinges. Item I owe unto John Barber thirtie sixe shillinges fower pence. Item, I owe unto Thomas Whittington, my sheephherd, fower poundes sixe shillinges eight pence. Item, I owe unto Edwarde Hollyocke for woode twenty shillinges.

XVI

EXAMPLES OF MARRIAGE LICENCE RECORDS

THE following grants of marriage licences entered in the registers of the bishops of Worcester show the changes in method of entry which resulted in the defective paragraphs of the lists in which the Shaxpere-Whateley licence is recorded:—

Bishop Jerome de Ghinucciis. Register No. XXVIII,
folio 64b. 28th January 1533.

xxviiij die mensis et anno domini ante dictis emanavit comissio domino Willelmo Basshe vicario perpetuo ecclesie parochialis de Erlingham Wigorniensis dioc. ad solempnizandum matrimonium in facie ecclesie inter Johannem Butt et Johannam Hyet parochie predictae cum una edicione bannorum in foribus ecclesie parochialis predictae tempore hujusmodi solempnizacionis dumtaxat faciendum nullo canonico interveniente impedimento.

Jerome de Ghinucciis. Folio 66b. 30th April 1534.

Ultimo die mensis Aprilis anno domini suprascripto emanavit commissio curato ecclesie Collegiate de Stratford Wigorniensis dioc. ad solempnizandum matrimonium in facie ecclesie cum una edicione bannorum inter quosdam Johannem Combe Juniorem de Astley Wigorniensis dioc. et Katherinam Quynye de Stratford predicto.

Bishop Pates. Register No. XXXI., folio 23b. 5th January 1556-7.

Quinto die mensis January anno domini &c. supradicto emanavit mandatum vicario ecclesie parochialis de Stratford-super-Avonam Wigorniensis dioc. ad solemnizandum matrimonium in facie ecclesie inter Margaretam Philippes ibidem viduam et Edwardum Walford parochie de Evenlode cum una edicione bannorum ante diem solemnizacionis &c. more solito edito nullo in ea parte canonico interveniente impedimento quum ad hoc congrue fuerit requisitum.

Bishop Bullingham. Register No. XXXII., folio 3a. 15th May 1571.

xv die mensis Maij anno domini prescripto concessa fuit licencia sive mandatum solemnizandi matrimonium in facie ecclesie cum una edicione bannorum tempore solemnizacionis hujusmodi matrimonii in ostio sive navi ecclesie dumtaxat faciendum inter Magistrum Henricum Heycroft vicarium ecclesie parochialis de Stratford-super-Avonam et Emmam Careles¹ ibidem ceterisque aliis concurrentibus de jure in hac parte requisitis dummodo aliud canonicum in ea parte nullo obstiterit impedimentum.

Bullingham. Folio 4b. 9th September 1571.

Item septimo die ejusdem mensis emanavit consimile mandatum solemnizandi matrimonium inter Thomam Elson et Annam Willoughby de Cropthorne vicario ibidem.

In the bond Elson is described as of Preston-on-Stour.

Bullingham. Folio 6a. 18th March 1571-2.

xvii^o die Martij eodem anno emanavit curato Sancti Andree civitatis Wigorn. solemnizandi matrimonium cum una edicione bannorum inter Thomam Wollasson et Margeriam Baker de Elmley Lovet.

¹ Married at Stratford-upon-Avon, June 18th, 1571.

Bullingham. Folio 9a. 11th December 1573.

Eiisdem die et anno emanavit licencia solemnizandi matrimonium in navi vel ostio alicujus ecclesie capelle seu oratorij intra dioces. Wigorn. inter Thomam Lucy armigerum et Dorotheam Arnold generosam parochie de Charlcote Wigorn. dioces. per eos eligendi &c. cum una edicione bannorum dummodo aliud canonicum &c.

Bishop Whitgift. Register No. XXXII., folio 14a. 23rd July 1577.

Item xxiiij die mensis et anno domini predicto emanavit licencia solemnizandi matrimonium inter Christoferum Cartewight et Elizabetham Emmes de Salford.

In the bond Cartewight is described as of Cleeve Prior.

The preceding entries have been selected from the series which terminated in 1577. Those which follow are from the lists of licences commencing in 1579.

Whitgift. Folio 39a. 4th April 1581.

Item quarto die mensis Aprilis anno domini 1581 emanavit licencia matrimonij inter Johannem Poet de Grimley et Margeriam Jones.

In the bond Poet is described as of the parish of Pirton, yeoman. The residence of the bride is given as Grimley. The name of a parish usually entered at the end of the paragraphs in the lists is omitted.

Whitgift. Folio 43b. 27th November 1582.

Item eodem die[similis emanavit licencia inter Wm. Shaxpere et Annam Whateley de Temple Grafton.

Other erroneous and defective entries are described on p. 26 and in Nos. XIV. and XVIII. of this Appendix.

XVII

THE TERMINAL PARISH

IN searching for records of the marriages in the parishes named in the bishop's registers the following results were obtained. Out of the 188 licences granted at Worcester during the years 1582 and 1583, it was found that in 46 cases, representing 28 parishes, the marriage registers are not in existence. 64 of the remaining licences were sought for and 40 were found,¹ these probably exemplifying cases in which the ceremony was performed in the bride's parish according to the general custom. I have learned, accidentally, that one of these marriages, for which a licence was issued on June 21st, 1583, to John Coombes and Elizabeth Kinnersley of Stratford,² was celebrated on June 23rd at Crowle, of which parish William Whateley, one of the sureties to the bond, was vicar.³ If the theory that the parish in the bishop's register was entered as the place of marriage were correct, most of the twenty-four entries not discovered would represent marriages elsewhere than in the church named in the licence—an explanation I hold to be very improbable for reasons already discussed. It would be interesting to ascertain where the missing marriages are registered; but this might necessitate a search in most of the surviving parish registers in the old diocese of Worcester.

¹ The registers of twenty-six parishes were included in my search. There is no reason to suppose that the result already obtained would be materially affected by extending it.

² Bishop Whitgift's Register, No. XXXII, fo. 52a.

³ He was the plaintiff in the tithe case mentioned on p. 27.

XVIII

THE SUBSTITUTED PARISHES

THE following particulars relate to the parishes in the bishop's register (during the years 1582 and 1583) that are not the residence of the bride. In five cases the cause of the substitution of another parish is clearly indicated.

| Particulars from licence-bond. | | | Terminal parish in bishop's register list of licences. | Observations. |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|--|
| Date. | Name. | Residence. | | |
| 1582 Oct. 12 | John Morley Joan Dale | Great Malvern Malvern | Newland | Married at Newland. |
| Nov. 27 | William Shag- spere Anne Hathway | Stratford upon Avon | Temple Grafton | Temple Grafton is not the residence of the sureties. The parish regi- ster is not in ex- istence. |
| 1582-3 Feb. 9 | George Wood Ann Ingram | Wytley Martley | Great Witley | Married at Great Witley. |
| 1583 Aug. 17 | Thomas Johnsons Margaret Greene | Bromsgrove Droitwich | Bromsgrove | The marriage re- gister is not in existence. Broms- grove is the resi- dence of the bride- groom. |
| Sept. 21 | Nicholas Cottrell Alice Bennett | Hill Croome Hill Croome | Upton on Severn | Not married at Up- ton. This place is the residence of one of the sure- ties. |

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| Particulars from licence-bond. | | | Terminal parish in bishop's register list of licences. | Observations. |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Date. | Name. | Residence. | | |
| 1588 Oct. 17 | Thomas Hancox Isabella Hobday | Rowington Wroxhall | Rowington | Rowington is the residence of the bridegroom. The parish register is not in existence. |
| Nov. 27 | William Mills Eleanor Randell, <i>alias</i> Mowle | Pershore All Saints, Worcester | Evesham | The marriage is not registered at All Saints, Eves- ham or All Saints, Worcester. Eves- ham is not the residence of the sureties. |

XIX

TEMPLE GRAFTON

THE village of Temple Grafton lies about five miles west from Stratford, a short distance to the south of the high-road to Alcester, and nearly three miles from that town. The title "Hunry Grafton" is found in a metrical description of several Warwickshire villages which has been attributed to Shakespeare, but is probably by John Jordan,¹ who has obtained some notoriety as a forger of documents relating to the poet.

Pipeing Pebworth, dancing Marston,
Raunting Hillborough, hungry Grafton,
With dodging Exhall, papist Wixford,
Beggarily Broom and drunken Bidford.

Apart from the mention of Temple Grafton in the record of Shakespeare's marriage licence the place possesses little antiquarian interest. The church, which is dedicated to St. Andrew, was built in 1875; but parts of the old structure have been preserved in the walls of the chancel. The manor came into the possession of the Knights Templars in the reign of Henry III. The first reference to the church appears in the Worcester episcopal register for the year 1277, in a "Mandate to the Archdeacon of Worcester to permit Ralph de Budeford, priest, to receive and administer the vicarage of the church of Grafton for a year, at the presentation of brother Joseph Kauncey of the house of the Hospital of Jerusalem

¹ *Original Collections of Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon*, p. 41.

(Jerom') in England—Dated at Wyk', the 8th of the Ides of December.”¹

In 1786 the parish contained 39 families, “two of them papists,” and service was then held in the church once a fortnight.²

¹ *The Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard* (No. I., fo. 71). Edited by J. Willis-Bund, p. 133.

² *Bishoprick Book*, Worcester Diocesan Registry. For further particulars as to the parish, see Dugdale, *History of Warwickshire*.

XX

MARRIAGE IN THE BRIDE'S PARISH

THE bride's parish was generally named in the old Worcester licences as the place of marriage. "'Twas an ancient custom, and a very good one, that a marriage should be performed in no other church, but that to which the woman belonged as a parishioner; and therefore to this day the Ecclesiastical Law allows a fee due to the curate of that church, whether she be married there or not. And this fee was expressly reserv'd for him by the words of the licence, according to the old form,¹ which is not yet disused in all dioceses: But 'tis said that judgment has been otherwise given in the Temporal Courts."²

¹ See example of a marriage licence in the Constitutions of 1597,—"*Abeque tamen*," etc.; Cardwell, *Synodalia*, i. 161.

² John Johnson, *The Clergy-Man's Vade-Mecum*, 1709, i. 188.

XXI

RICHARD HATHAWAY, THE DRAMATIST

IN Henslowe's Diary there are several references to Richard Hathaway, the dramatist. One of the first of these, dated April 1598, is the notice of a play by that author, *The Life of Arthur King of England*. Another entry relates to a payment to Richard Hathway and W. Rankins, author of the "Seven Satyres," for a play supplied to Henslowe: "Receaved by us Richard Hathway and William Rankins in part of payment for the play of Hanniball and Scipio the sum of forty shillynges, we say receaved the 3 day of January 1600."¹

In the *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxv. 157, Richard Hathaway is described as a dramatist and "probably a native of Warwickshire."² . . . Although named by Francis Meres in 1598 as among the best writers of comedy in his day (*Wit's Treasury, New Shakspeare Soc.*, p. 161), Hathway was one of the struggling dramatists in the pay of Philip Henslowe."

Bohn says, "It has been supposed that the Richard Hathaway, who was a contemporary player with Shakespeare and is frequently mentioned in Henslowe's Diary, was the poet's brother-in-law."³ There is no proof of this, but he may have been one of the Shottery Hathaways who had settled in London before Shakespeare went there.

It is a curious coincidence that a week before Shakespeare's

¹ *Henslowe's Diary from 1591 to 1609*, edited by J. P. Collier, p. 97. See also a reference to Hathaway's share in the production of *Sir John Oldcastle*, Malone's *Preface*, 1790.

² Baptism at Stratford-upon-Avon, January 4th, 1561-2, "Richardus filius Richardi Hathaway alias Gardner."

³ *The Biography and Bibliography of Shakespeare*, by Henry G. Bohn, p. 59.

marriage licence was obtained from the Bishop of Worcester, a similar licence was issued by the Bishop of London, on November 20th, 1582, to the Curate of Saint Bartholomew near the Royal Exchange, London, for a marriage between Richard Hathewaye of the parish of St. Laurence Jury, Gentleman, and Anne Maddoxe of London, maiden, with one publication of the banns.¹ This bridegroom may have been the dramatist, and it would be of interest to obtain more information about him in view of the further possibility that he was one of the Stratford Hathaways, and befriended the poet on his arrival in London, before or soon after his own marriage. His connection with the theatre may have enabled him to give Shakespeare his first introduction to the stage. In any case the grant of licences to two Hathaways within a few days is worthy of note.

¹ *Vicar General's Book* No. 4, fo. 301b, Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House.

XXII

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, WORCESTER

IN connection with the suggestion that Shakespeare may have been married at the church of Saint Martin, Worcester, Mr. Richard Savage has called my attention to the fact that a part of the parish register containing the records of marriages for the year 1582 has been abstracted. On examining the register I found that the two missing leaves which contained the entries for several years, including the date of Shakespeare's marriage licence, had been cut out, the freshness of the edges of a small portion of the parchment still attached to the binding thread indicating removal at a comparatively recent date. The church officials have no information about the theft, the object of which is difficult to explain, but it has been suggested that it was the act of some person who had a mania for the possession of such memorials as the record of the poet's marriage.

The church, which was re-built in 1772, stands at the north-west corner of the Corn Market.

XXIII

LUDDINGTON

LUDDINGTON, one of the places named in connection with Shakespeare's marriage, is a small hamlet on the north bank of the Avon, about three miles below Stratford. In the time of Shakespeare it was one of the chapelries in that parish. In the *Worcester Bishoprick Book*,¹ which was compiled about 1782, Luddington Chapel is described as being then in ruins. An entry made a few years later states that "The Chapel is demolished."² In or about 1780 John Jordan thus described the village:—

"Here is nothing remarkable in this place, except the ruins of an ancient chapel, of which our records do not give us any account, more than the presentation of it was given in the reign of Henry VIII, to a priest who officiated at the altar of St. Thomas the Martyr of Stratford church, in the presence of the warden of the College. . . . It appears by the Register of Stratford, that, April 2, 1612, the Rev. Thomas Hunt was curate of it."³

The tradition that Shakespeare was married at Luddington may be of modern origin, as suggested by Halliwell-Phillipps;⁴ but the late Mr. Edgar Flower informed me that it was generally accepted in the neighbourhood early in the last century.

¹ Worcester Diocesan Registry.

² See also W. Salt-Brassington, *Shakespeare's Homeland*, p. 336.

³ *Original Collections of Shakespeare*, selected by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, p. 66.

⁴ *Outlines*, ii. 364, note No. 299.

XXIV

CERTIFICATES OF CONSENT

THE only certificates of consent at the Worcester Diocesan Registry consist of some fragments in a bundle of bonds which represent all that now remain of the licence documents from 1600 to 1611. The following, addressed to the Chancellor of the diocese, is the earliest and most complete of these certificates: "These are to certifie your worshipp that there is noe impedymente by reason of any precontracte consanguynytye affynytie or any other lawfull meanes but that Richard Gerrett and Alice Bradley of Barcheston may lawfullie solemnize matrimony togeather. Signifieing also unto your worshipp, that their parents on both sydes are consenteng and agreeing that a marriag should by your worships licence be had betwixt them. Dated this xvith of Aprill 1601.

16^o Aprilis 1601. Juravit coram
me de consensu parentum Tho.
Waterman Curatus de Barcheston
qui est nuncius destinatus a parie-
tibus utriusque."

Your worships to be com-
manded.

Tho^o Watterma, C^{ll}ic.

Thomas Waterman was also a surety to the bond.

In another certificate the consent of the parents of the bride is thus assured: "Know all men by theese presents that wee Richard Baylies and Joane Baylies my wyfe this the 9th day of December 1611 within the parish of Stoke Prior in the Countye of Worcester doe give our full perfect and absolute assent, consent and good will and likeing that John Garrett

the sonne of John Garrett of Bradeley Greene in y^e countie aforesaid shall marie take to wyfe and live with our daughter Jane Baylies according unto God his law and ordinance."

On June 12th, 1611, Alexander Batcheler, Minister, of Stratford-upon-Avon, in a letter to Edward Traunter, one of the officials at the Worcester Registry, recommended the issue of a licence to Thomas Walker of Stratford-upon-Avon and Katheren Kirby of Warwick, and urged expedition: "There is no danger in the graunting of your licence. . . . Parents of both sides are fullye agreed."¹

In a letter to Mr. William Warmstry, the Registrar, dated October 14th, 1611, Robert Gower writes: "I beseache you lett me entreate you to lett your man dyrect a licence to the parson of Wyttley, Shrawley, or Astley that yf one of them be owte of the way or nott able the other may joyne in matrimony Thomas Mounde Gent. of Newnham in this County to Elizabeth Hopton of Wick Sapie alias Gowlde Wicke in this Countie Singell woman and I as her guardian doe give my free consent hereunto. . . . He that shalbe her husband is of his selfe and not under government of any. I beseache you let your man make it forthwith and he shall be payed for his paynes."²

The following examples of the various classes in the Worcester bonds referred to at page 30 are taken from Allegation Book No. 1 at the London Diocesan Registry, and they include cases in which the bride was under the immediate control of her parents, or was one who, with a parent living, resided with relatives, friends, or employers, or was under the control of a governor to whom a parent could delegate his right of consent. There are also instances in which the consent of the bride herself is certified.

On January 13th, 1598-9, a licence was granted for the marriage of Henry Archer and "Anne Crowch . . . of the age of 22 years or thereabouts dwelling in the parish of St.

¹ Richard Danckes of Stratford upon Avon, Plūmer, was one of the sureties to the bond.

² These three documents are in a bundle of bonds and other documents at the Worcester Diocesan Registry.

Marye Woolchurch the natural daughter of Gyles Crowch of the same parish." And one "Mr. Dodsonne, Gowldesmith . . . exhibited a certificate under the hand of the aforesaid Mr. Gyles Crowche and offereth to make faith . . . that the said Anne Crowche marrieth with her father's consent."

On December 8th, 1597, "John Sherley of St. Michell's Cornehill Hosier . . . alleged that he is to marry with Francys Wood maiden of the same parish dwelling with John Sandbrooke of the same parish being her uncle by marriage and she having no frend alive but her father who is a very poor minister and not able to give her anything, and she liveth at the charge only of her said uncle."

5th December, 1601. A licence for the marriage of Richard Debdale and Anne Brownloe, maiden, aged about 27 years, whose father was dead. In this case her brother affirmed that "his sister [the bride] was consenting to the marriage also he consented—likewise with consent of Mr. Chetherole of St. Andrews whose servant she nowe is."

11th February, 1597-8. Thomas Panton and Elizabeth Davyson Maiden "aged about 24 years . . . having neither father nor mother livinge . . . Alice Davison, widow, . . . the mother in lawe and sole governor of the said Elizabeth Davison testified her consent and good liking of the said intended marriage."

December 4th, 1598. "This day appeared personally . . . John Holmes . . . to marry with one Elizabeth Brand, Widdowe . . . At which time also appeared Silas Tyto . . . and testyfyeth that the sayd Elizabeth Brand is consenting unto the sayd marriage."

It is directed by the Constitutions of 1597 that when the assurance of consent of parent or governors has not been given personally, the certificate shall be conveyed by persons of honourable position and good reputation, who are to declare on oath that the certificate has been received from the hands of those entitled to give consent.

The 103rd Canon of 1603 enjoins that "before such licence shall be granted, it shall appear to the Judge by the oaths of

two sufficient witnesses, one of them to be known either to the Judge himself, or to some other person of good reputation then present, and known likewise to the said Judge, that the express consent of the parents or parent (if one of them be dead), or guardians or guardian of the parties, is thereunto had and obtained."

XXV

JOHN SHAKESPEARE, RECUSANT (?)

In a document preserved at Warwick Castle it is recorded that certain persons were reported at Stratford under the Act 23 Elizabeth c. 1, which imposed a fine of £20 for non-attendance at church. The local return is as follows :—

Wee suspect theese nyne personns next ensuinge absent themselves for feare of processes.

Mr. John Wheeler
John his sonne
Mr. John Shackspeare
Mr. Nycholas Barnehurste
Tho. James alias Giles
William Baynton
Rychard Harington
William Fluellen
George Bardell

The return was probably sent to the Commissioners shortly before September 25th, 1592, for the names were included in the return made on that date to the Privy Council by Sir Thomas Lucy and others of "The names of all such recusantes as have bene heartofore presented for not comminge monethlie to the church according to hir Majesties lawes, and yet are thought to forbear the church for debtt and for fear of processe, or for soom other worse faultes, or for age, sicknes, or impotencye of bodie."

It is not known why John Shakespeare failed to make the prescribed attendances at church; but it has been assumed that adherence to the old faith or to the new Puritanism was the cause. Arguments on each side of this question are to be found in *The Religion of Shakespeare*, by the Revd. H. S. Bowden, and in *Shakespeare, Puritan and Recusant*, by the Revd. Thomas Carter.¹ The reference to the "fear of processes" is difficult to understand. Halliwell-Phillipps observes, "How much of local favouritism there was in this, or what hopes of establishing conversions may have been based on pressure to be employed during the exercise of a temporary leniency, it is now impossible to say," and he calls attention to the fact that "there was no action of any kind against him in the Court of Record throughout the year in question, and, from the last day of June to the end of 1591, the only suit that affected him was one in which he was the plaintiff and recovered a debt with costs."²

The date at which John Shakespeare was first reported for not attending church is unknown; but his name may have been included in a return to Bishop Whitgift under the Order in Council received in 1582: "As the Lords of the Council had written to our Bishop last year, for making enquiry after Popish recusants in his diocese . . . they thought not fit to let this weighty matter drop; but in the beginning of this year sent again to the Bishop (as they did to all the rest) to return an exact account of such in every parish as still refused coming to church; and of such as being convicted, did not conform themselves: so that certificates thereof might be returned into the King's Bench next term."³

¹ See also Joseph Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History of the English Catholics*, v. 498.

² *Outlines*, ii. 397-8.

³ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 195.

XXVI

REASONS FOR MARRIAGE LICENCES

IN the episcopal registers at Worcester the only direct reference to the reason for granting a marriage licence appears in the record of a grant, dated August 4th, 1531, to Richard Wheler alias Quyller and Elizabeth Brode, between whom the third and fourth degrees of affinity existed.¹ Blackstone says: "in times of popery, a great variety of degrees of kindred were made impediments to marriage, which impediments might however be bought off for money." *Commentaries*, 1826, i. 434.

Reasons for marriage dispensations are mentioned in the Articles drawn up by Archbishop Whitgift and the bishops in September 1583, but in terms too general to be of much service in this enquiry: "As persons of Honest Worshipful and Honourable calling may necessarily and reasonably have occasion sometimes to solemnize Marriage by Licence for the Banns asking or for once or twice without any great harm."²

The following reasons in favour of licences to marry were given in answer to a bill in parliament against them. The document bears no date, but was probably prepared by the bishops about the year 1597:—

"I.—Licences to marry according to the form set down without banns, are no cause of disordered marriage, but rather the contrary. For they express all causes that might be any let of the marriage in law: and yield no licence to marry in those cases; but add to the prohibitions of the law a restraint by a bond also. And if one may speak a truth, it may be said justly, that it is a matter, not only not hurtful, but also very profitable to be continued in the commonwealth.

¹ Register, *Jeromini*, No. XXVIII., fo. 48a. Worcester Diocesan Registry.

² Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, i. 232.

For first, seeing consent in marriage is the matter specially to be regarded, and credit of kindred, honour, wealth, contentment, and pleasure of friends, be rather matters of conveniency than necessity in matrimony; it were better to tolerate the means wherewith consent of the parties themselves may more freely effect an honest matrimony, than by tract of time publishing a marriage before-hand, either the parties be occasioned to stay through bashfulness themselves, or their friends or enemies, by forbidding the banns, should give let thereunto. And touching parents, for whom especially the respect is had. Parents oftentimes measure their affections rather according to the humour they have themselves, (being old,) than regard the good liking of the young folks to be matched. And therefore rather seek to bestow their children in wealth or honour, or strength of friends, than are willing to suffer them to bestow themselves according to their own choice; although they chuse never so well, in respect of vertue and honest education. Divers times men of honourable degree have liking of mean persons. So sometimes rich have of poor, and old of young, masters and mistresses of their servants; and, to conclude, superiors of their inferiors; parties in disparity of each other. All which will willinglier marry secretly, than make public declaration before-hand of their liking thereunto. Which cannot be but a let often unto honest marriage. Likewise sometimes it may fall out, that a lame or impotent man for comfort; a man who hath lived loosly many years of his life with some one woman, may be desirous even in the very point of death to marry her, either in remorse of conscience, to make some part of amends unto her, or for the good of his children he had by her, which cannot be effected, if he must stay till banns be solemnly pronounced. Also, the friends, or the parties themselves, being desirous to avoid charge, would be glad to match secretly, which cannot justly be reprehended, if there be no other let. And therefore in many respects it may be concluded, that licences for marryages are not so hurtful as some would have them accounted."¹

¹ Styrpe, *Life of Whitgift*, iii. 380.

XXVII

SOCIAL POSITION OF PERSONS LICENSED

IN 50 of the 166 bonds executed in the years 1582 and 1583 the position of the bridegroom is either not described or doubtful. The persons specified in the remainder are 28 yeomen, 31 husbandmen, and 36 craftsmen of various kinds, such as tailors, smiths, bakers, carriers, and shoemakers, while the only members of the class usually associated with marriages by licence in ancient times are represented by 14 gentlemen and 6 clerks in holy orders. In a paper for "the regulation of licences for marriage and of fees"—probably drawn up in 1597—it was provided "That no person be licensed to marry, the Banns not thrice asked ; unless he have in goods and Lands to the value of £10 in the Queen's Books. (It was an Hundred Marks, but blotted out, and £10 put in the place.)"¹ It was ordered by the 101st canon (1603) that a licence should be granted "unto such persons only as be of good state and quality and that upon good caution or security taken."

¹ Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, ii. 380.

XXVIII

THE PROHIBITED SEASONS

THESE restraints are of ancient origin, and it was a custom of the Romans to avoid marriage upon certain days. "Popular prejudice forbade any marriage to be solemnized in May, but we are quite ignorant of the origin of this superstition. The Kalends, Nones, and Ides of each month, and the day after the Kalends, Nones, and Ides were also avoided, as well as those days on which sacrifices were offered to the spirits of the dead, and all *Dies Atri*." ¹ In the early Christian church the restraints were applied to days and seasons of special religious solemnity. Weddings were prohibited during Lent by the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 365 (Canon 52).

One of the ordinances of the Council of Enham (or Eynesham near Oxford) in the year 1009 is as follows: "And ordeals, and oaths, and marriages, are always forbidden on high festival days and on regular ember-days; and from Adventum Domini till the octaves of the Epiphany; and from Septuagesima till xv. days after Easter. And at those holy tides, let there be, as is right, to all Christian men, general peace and concord, and let every strife be appeased, and if anyone owe another 'borh' or 'bōt' on account of secular matters, let him willingly fulfil it to him, before or after." ²

In the sixteenth century, attempts were made to curtail the prohibited seasons then observed, the proceedings in Convocation showing that the church was not averse to the change.

¹ William Ramsay, *A Manual of Roman Antiquities*, 1894, p. 477.

² *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England—Laws of King Ethelred*. "Of the Ordinances of the Witan," No. 25, p. 137.

Among some "General notes of matters to be moved by the clergy in the next parliament and synod," dated 1562, is the following: "That it shall be lawful to marry at any time of the year without dispensation, except it be upon Christmas-day, Easter-day, and six days going before, and upon Pentecost Sunday." In 1575 it was agreed "that the bishops take order that it be published and declared in every parish church within their diocese before the first day of May next coming that marriages may be solemnized at all times of the year. . . . The queen probably ordered it to be erased, being unwilling to abandon the ancient custom of the church which prohibited the celebration of marriage at such seasons."¹

A recent writer says, "But it seems uncertain how far this prohibition ever obtained in England; there is no constitution on it or notice thereon except a gloss in Lyndwood. . . . But the Protestant Ayliffe observes that, admitting that banns are never published in Lent, yet by licence marriages are then solemnized, 'but as for the time of Advent which was never observed in our Church as a fast there is no foundation for such a prohibition with us.' . . . And the reason of this prohibition . . . is, that 'those who have wives ought at those times to be as those who have none, and therefore those who have none ought not to change the condition.'"²

In Jacob's *Law Dictionary*, 1782, under the title "Marriage," it is stated that "Marriages are prohibited in Lent, and on fasting days, because the mirth attending them is not suitable to the humiliation and devotion of those times; yet persons may marry with licences in Lent, although the banns of marriage may not then be published." I have found no other authority for this further prohibition; but it is possible that, even without the authority of Canon Law, some of the clergy may have refused to publish banns during the prohibited seasons.

An account of these prohibitions is found in the parish register of South Benfleet, Essex: "To know the season when marriage is out of season. It goeth out on February 7 and

¹ Cardwell, *Synodalia*, i. 133.

² W. N. Geary, *The Law of Marriage*, p. 64.

comes not again till Low Sunday. It goeth out again on Rogation Sundaye and continueth out till Trinity Sundaye, from which time 'tis in season until Advent, when it goeth out until January 13th and continueth on thence 'till February 7th." In a letter, dated January 29th, 1900, the Revd. Charles Francis Box, Vicar of South Benfleet, informed me, in reply to my enquiries on the subject of the "Prohibited Seasons," that the entries of baptisms, etc., in the parish register commence in 1663; but that there is another date, "Anno Salutis 1662," with the name of the Vicar, "Jeffrey Philmead." The date of the entry as to the seasons for marriage is therefore uncertain.

The following record of a citation for marrying without licence is entered in the Visitation Book of the Worcester Consistory Court. The persons cited, Thomas Quynie and his wife, were married during a prohibited season. See pages 67 and 133-4:—

Stratford.

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| vij ^a et modus | Officialis domini contra Thomam Quynie et ejus uxorem. Excommunicatio emititur (?). | Quod nupti fuerunt absque licencia his citati per Nixon non comparuerunt in Consistorio (?) 12 non comparuerunt excommunicati. |
|------------------------------|--|--|

Stratford.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| vij ^a and the licence- fee (?) | The lord's official against Thomas Quynie and his wife. The excommunication is published (?). | Because they were married without licence. Twice cited by Nixon they did not appear in the Consistory (?) [On the] 12th they did not appear: they were excommunicated. |
|--|--|--|

XXIX

WILLIAM BEESTON (16 . . [?]-1682)

THE following are Aubrey's notes on William Beeston, whose name he mentions in his account of William Shakespeare:—

"Did I tell you that I have mett with old Mr. . . .¹ who knew all the old English poets, whose lives I am taking from him: his father was master of the . . . playhouse.² The more to be admired, quaere—he was not a company keeper; lived in Shoreditch; would not be debauched; and if invited to court, was in paine.

"W. Shakespeare—quaere Mr. Beeston, who knowes most of him from Mr. Lacy. He lives in Shoreditch at Hog Lane within 6 dores north of Folgate. *Quaere etiam* for Ben Jonson.

"Old Mr. Beeston, whom Mr. (John) Dreyden calls 'the chronicle of the stage,' died at his house in Bishopsgate Street Without, about Bartholomew-tyde 1682. Mr. Shipecy in Somerset-house hath his papers."³

¹ Blank in MS., Aubrey forgetting the name at the moment.

² "Christopher Beeston, Shakspeare's fellow-comedian," Malone, *Historical Account of the English Stage*.

³ "*Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey between the years 1669 and 1696.*" Edited by Dr. Andrew Clark, i. 96-7. In a note the editor says: "The first part of the note seems to be a character of Beeston, the second part is a note of questions to be put to him."

XXX

DOWDALL'S LETTER

THE importance which has been attached to the parish-clerk's alleged communication to Dowdall renders it necessary that the genuineness of the letter to "Mr. Southwell" should be established. On the title page of the book in which Dowdall's anecdotes appear, it is stated that they are "Now first published from the Original Manuscript," and, in the "Advertisement," that "The following Letter, which is now for the first time printed, came into the hands of the publisher upon the dispersion of the papers of the family of Lord De Clifford, which were sold by auction in the year 1834. It is addressed to Mr. Edward Southwell, and is endorsed by him, 'From Mr. Dowdall, Description of several places in Warwickshire.'"¹ The editor's name is not given, but Lowndes (p. 2331) states that the book was edited by J. P. Collier. The association of this latter name with the publication of Dowdall's account will somewhat detract from the value of the parish-clerk's anecdote, pending the discovery and verification of the MS., which, I am informed, does not appear in the Sale-catalogues of the De Clifford or Rodd libraries.

The MS. was in the possession of J. O. Halliwell (afterwards Halliwell-Phillipps) in 1853, and a facsimile of a page is given in his folio edition of Shakespeare's works (i. 77) issued at that date. Mr. Marsden J. Perry, of Rhode Island, U.S.A., purchased from the Executors the Shakespearean documents collected by Halliwell-Phillipps; but he informs

¹ *Traditionary Anecdotes of Shakespears, Collected in Warwickshire in the year 1698.* London, Thomas Rodd, Great Newport Street, 1838.



WHERE IS THE MS.?

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me that Dowdall's MS. was not included therein. There is just the possibility that the MS. may have been disposed of at one of the sales of portions of the collection which Mr. Perry informs me were held by Messrs. Sotheby & Wilkinson in 1877-9.

My attempts to discover the MS. have been unsuccessful, and as, unfortunately, the facsimile does not give any assurance of the genuineness of the original, reliance cannot be placed upon the information it conveys.

The whole of the inferences drawn from Dowdall's account should therefore be read with the reserve necessary in dealing with traditions the origin of which is doubtful.

XXXI

THE BIDFORD LEGEND

THE origin of this tradition cannot be traced to an earlier date than the middle of the eighteenth century. Halliwell-Phillipps gives the following version: "A gentleman who visited Stratford-on-Avon in 1762, relates how the host of the White Lion Inn took him to Bidford 'and showed me in the hedge a crab-tree called Shakespeare's Canopy, because under it our poet slept one night; for he, as well as Ben Johnson, loved a glass for the pleasure of society; and he, having heard much of the men of that village as deep drinkers and merry fellows, one day went over to Bidford to take a cup with them;—he enquired of a shepherd for the Bidford drinkers, who replied they were absent, but the Bidford sippers were at home, and, I suppose, continued the sheepkeeper, they will be sufficient for you; and so, indeed, they were; he was forced to take up his lodging under that tree for some hours,' *British Magazine* for June 1762. This is the only traditional account which is of the slightest value, but a ridiculous amplification of it is narrated by Jordan in a manuscript written about the year 1770."¹

The crab-tree under which Shakespeare is supposed to have slept after the carouse formerly stood in the hedge-row of the road leading from Bidford to Stratford. The decayed remains of the tree were removed to Bidford Grange on December 4th, 1824,² and a sapling was planted, in or about the year 1880, on the south side of the road leading from Bidford to Stratford, and three quarters of a mile from Bidford church.

¹ *Outlines*, ii. 325–8. See also *The Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1794.

² C. F. Green, *The Legend of the Crab Tree*, 1857, p. 18.

XXXII

ENQUIRIES BY AUBREY AND BETTERTON

THERE is no authentic record of the visits of Aubrey and Betterton to Stratford-upon-Avon. The date at which Aubrey's visit was made is supposed by Halliwell-Phillipps to have been about the year 1662.¹ In a letter to Anthony à Wood, dated June 15th, 1680, Aubrey says: "I have according to your desire putt in writing these Minutes of Lives. . . . 'Tis a taske that I never thought to have undertaken till you imposed it upon me, sayeing that I was fitt for it."² Aubrey became acquainted with Wood in 1667.

Betterton retired from the stage in 1700. Charles Knight says: "He died in 1710; and, looking at his busy life, it is probable that he did not make this journey into Warwickshire until after his retirement from the theatre. Had he set about these enquiries earlier, there can be little doubt that the 'Life' by Rowe would have contained more precise and satisfactory information, if not fewer idle tales."³

Halliwell-Phillipps says the visit was made "most likely at some time about the year 1690;"⁴ "it is hardly likely to have occurred in his declining years, and towards the close of his life he was afflicted with a complaint that must have rendered any of the old modes of travelling exceedingly irksome. He is mentioned, however, as having in 1709 a country house at Reading."⁵

¹ *Outlines*, i. x.

² *Letters written by Eminent Persons . . . and Lives of Eminent Men* (1813), vol. ii. part i. pp. 197-8.

³ *William Shakspeare, A Biography*, p. 280.

⁴ *Outlines*, i. xii.

⁵ *Outlines*, ii. 251, note 8. Malone says that Betterton's visit was made after the year 1700, "when he was above seventy years of age." *Historical Account of the English Stage*.

The following dates indicate the possibilities of communication with Shakespeare's contemporaries or descendants:— The poet died at Stratford-upon-Avon on April 23rd, 1616. His sister, Joan Hart, died there in 1646, and his eldest daughter, Susanna Hall, in 1649, having survived her husband fourteen years. Her daughter Elizabeth, who married Thomas Nash,¹ lived at Stratford until 1649, when she married John Barnard, and removed to Abington in Northamptonshire, where she died in February, 1669–70. She was Shakespeare's last lineal descendant. His daughter, Judith Quiney, died at Stratford in February, 1661–2. Shakespeare's godson, William Walker,² died at Stratford in March 1679–80. William Castle, the parish clerk who is stated to have given the information to Dowdall, was baptized at Stratford on July 17th, 1614,³ and was buried there on November 19th, 1701. At a vestry meeting held on March 11th, 1697, "William Castle declared that hee was willing to resigne upp his sexton's place." *Vestry Minute Book*, 1617–1699.

¹ Thomas Nash died in 1647.

² William Walker was baptized at Stratford on October 16th, 1608. An entry in the Stratford parish register records the burial of one "Mr. William Walker" on March 1st, 1679–80.

³ The baptism of a William Castle is recorded on August 10th, 1628; but, as Dowdall says the parish-clerk was above 80 years old in 1693, the earlier date is no doubt correct.

XXXIII

SHAKESPEARE'S EARLIEST WORK IN THE POEMS AND PLAYS

THERE is much difference of opinion on the subject of the dates of Shakespeare's first work as a poet and dramatist. As to the Sonnets, Mr. Samuel Butler says: "The words 'my pupil pen' will, I believe, suggest to most readers more strongly than they seem to have done to Steevens that in the Sonnets we have Shakespeare's first essays in writing. In this case 1585 seems a very reasonable date for the opening sonnets. Against this must be set the fact that Shakespeare, in his dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Lord Southampton, calls it 'the first heir of my invention;' he may well, however, have so called it, though aware that he had already written a large number of sonnets."¹ Mr. Parker Godwin says: "We cannot fix the precise year in which they [the Sonnets] were written, but we may assign the period within which they were written. It covered the time between 1582, about the date of his marriage, and 1592, when he had become more or less famous both as an actor and as a playwright."²

The supposed date of the composition of *Venus and Adonis* given by Drake is 1587-90.³ Halliwell-Phillipps says "the oft-repeated belief that *Venus and Adonis* was a production of his younger days at Stratford-on-Avon can hardly be sustained. It is extremely improbable that an epic, so highly finished and so completely devoid of patois, could have been produced

¹ *Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered*, p. 90.

² *A New Study of the Sonnets of Shakespeare*, p. 26.

³ *Shakespeare and His Times*, i. 427.

under the circumstances of his then domestic surroundings.”¹ This appears, however, to furnish another argument in favour of the earlier removal from Stratford.

In commenting upon the dates of the composition of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* Dr. Gervinus says: “*Lucrece* belongs indisputably to the same period. Both poems were certainly revised at publication. Their first conception may place them at a period previous to Shakespeare’s settlement in London. Every thing betrays that they were written in the first passion of youth.”² This writer also says that Shakespeare left Stratford “in the year 1586, or at the latest 1587.”³ Dr. Sidney Lee says: “‘The first heir of my invention’ implies that the poem was written, or at least designed, before Shakespeare’s dramatic work.” He gives 1591 as the date of Shakespeare’s earliest play.⁴

Mr. F. S. Boas says that *Titus Andronicus* “dates almost certainly from 1587 or 1588.”⁵ Mr. Churton Collins says: “It seems to me highly probable that it was composed at Stratford before he came up to London as early perhaps as 1585.”⁶

The earlier tragedy of *Hamlet*, referred to by Thomas Nash in his prefatory epistle to Greene’s *Menaphon*, is probably that which was played at Newington Butts in 1594—“9 of June 1594 at *Hamlet*—viii,” *Henslowe’s Diary*. This play, of which no copy is known to be in existence, has been attributed to Thomas Kyd, but it has also been considered probable that Marlowe or Shakespeare may have had some hand in it.⁷ As Nash’s Preface was written in 1589,⁸ there does not appear to be any difficulty with regard to Shakespeare’s part or even sole authorship six years after Aubrey’s date for his arrival in London, when he was doubtless not only able to improve an old play but to produce an original one.

¹ *Outlines*, i. 104.

² *Shakespeare Commentaries*, p. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴ *A Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 75 and 46.

⁵ *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*, p. 137.

⁶ *Studies in Shakespeare*, p. 108.

⁷ See Howard Staunton, *The Works of Shakespeare*, 1866, vii. 100.

⁸ Introduction to *Robert Greene*, English Scholar’s Library, pp. xii. and xiii.

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The *Comedy of Errors* was played at Gray's Inn on December 28th, 1594.¹

The following dates of composition of the Poems and Plays have been proposed by Dr. F. J. Furnivall in his "*Trial Table of the Order of Shakspeare's Plays*," and by Professor Dowden in the preface to his "*Shakspeare, a Critical Study of his Mind and Art*." Both of the tables are printed in the latter work, at pp. x. and xvii., to which the reader is referred for an instructive arrangement into "Periods" and "Groups," which are worthy of careful study. The dates are given with the kind permission of the Authors.

| | Supposed dates. | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| | Dr. Furnivall. | Professor Dowden. |
| Venus and Adonis | 1585-7 | (?) 1592 |
| Titus Andronicus | (?) 1588 | 1588-90 |
| | Toucht up } | Touched by } Shakspeare } |
| Love's Labour's Lost | 1588-9 | 1590 |
| Comedy of Errors | 1589-91 | 1591 |
| Midsummer Night's Dream ... | 1590-1 | 1593-4 |
| | (? two dates) } | |
| Two Gentlemen of Verona ... | 1590-2 | 1592-3 |
| 1 Henry VI. | (?) 1590-2 | 1590-1 ² |
| | Toucht up } | Touched by } Shakspeare } |
| Lucrece | — | 1593-4 |
| Romeo and Juliet | (?) 1591-3 | (?) Two dates, 1591, 1597 |
| A Lover's Complaint | — | — ³ |
| Richard II. | 1593-4 | 1594 |
| Richard III. | 1594 | 1593 |
| 2 Henry VI. | (?) 1594-5 | 1591-2 |
| | Re-cast } | |
| 3 Henry VI. | (?) 1594-5 | 1591-2 |
| | Re-cast } | |

¹ *Gesta Grayorum*, 1688, pp. 20-2.

² Malone's date is 1589.

³ Published in the 1609 edition of *The Sonnets*.

| | Supposed dates. | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Dr. Furnivall. | Professor Dowden. |
| King John | 1595 | 1595 |
| Merchant of Venice | (?) 1596 | 1596 |
| Taming of the Shrew | (?) 1596-7 } Part } | (?) 1597 |
| 1 Henry IV. | 1596-7 | 1597-8 |
| 2 Henry IV. | 1597-8 | 1597-8 |
| Merry Wives of Windsor | 1598-9 | (?) 1598 |
| Henry V. | 1599 | 1599 |
| Much Ado about Nothing | 1599-1600 | 1598 |
| As you Like It | 1600 | 1599 |
| Twelfth Night | 1601 | 1600-1 |
| All's Well that Ends Well | 1601-2 | (?) 1601-2 |
| The Sonnets | (?) 1592-1602 | (?) 1595-1605 |
| Hamlet | 1602-3 | 1602 |
| Measure for Measure | (?) 1603 | 1603 |
| Julius Cæsar | (?) 1601-3 | 1601 |
| Othello | (?) 1604 | 1604 |
| Macbeth | 1605-6 | 1606 |
| Lear | 1605-6 | 1605 |
| Troilus and Cressida | 1606-7 } (?) Completed } | (?) 1603; Revised 1607 (?) |
| Antony and Cleopatra | 1606-7 | 1607 |
| Coriolanus | (?) 1607-8 | 1608 |
| Timon | 1607-8 } Part } | 1607-8 |
| Pericles | 1608 } Part } | 1608 |
| Tempest | 1610 | 1610 |
| Cymbeline | 1610-2 | 1609 |
| Winter's Tale | (?) 1611 | 1610-1 |
| <i>Doubtful Plays.</i> | | |
| Two Noble Kinsmen | 1609 | 1612 |
| Henry VIII. | 1613 | 1612-3 |

XXXIV

THE ADMINISTRATION OF RICHARD SHAKESPEARE'S GOODS

THE bond executed on a grant of administration of the goods of Richard Shakespere of Snitterfield, deceased, to John Shakespere of the same parish, husbandman. Worcester Probate Registry.

Noverint universi per presentes nos Johannem Shakespere de Snytterfyld in comitatu Warwici agricolam et Thomam Nycols de Snytterfyld predicto in comitatu predicto agricolam teneri et firmiter obligari Thome Powell generoso et Willelmo Warmstrey notario publico in centum libris sterlingorum solvendis eisdem Thome et Willelmo heredibus executoribus vel assignatis suis ad quam quidem solucionem bene et fideliter faciendam obligamus nos et utrumque nostrum per se pro toto et in solidum heredes executores et administratores nostros per presentes. Sigillis nostris sigillatas Datum decimo die mensis Februarij anno regni domine Elizabethæ Dei gratia Angliæ Franciæ et Hiberniæ regine fidei defensoris &c. Tercio.

The condition of this obligation is suche that if thabove bounden John Shakespere administrator of the goodes catals and debtes of Richard Shakespere deceased late whiles he lyved of the pariahe of Snytterfyld in the diocese of Worcestre do well and truly administre the said goodes catals and debtes in manner and forme followinge that is to saye do paye his debtes so fare as his goodes wyll thereunto extend. And do also yeld and rendre a trewe playne and full accompte of his administration made in and upon the said goodes catalls and

debtes to thordinarye of the said diocese of Worcestre for the tyme beinge at suche tyme and place as he shalbe thereunto lawfully required. And do also upon his proper costes and expenses defend and save harmeles the Right reverend father in God Lord Edwine Bushoppe of Worcestre. And thabove named master Thomas Powell his vicar generall and Wylliam Warmstrey his registrar of the said diocese and every of them allwayes and at all tymes against all manner persons for grauntinge sealinge and deliveringe unto him a lettre of administration to administre the said goodes catalls and debtes and for all other causes which maye ensue by reason and occasion thereof that then this obligation to be voyde and of noe effecte ore else to stand and abyde in his full strengthe power and vertue.

Memorandum of the administration grant on February 10th, 1600-1, in the Register *Testamenta vestusta*, Worcester Probate Registry.

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| Ricard | } | Eisdem die et anno commissa fuit adminis- |
| Shakespere | | tracio bonorum Ricardi Shackespere defuncti |
| | | nuper dum vixit parochie de Snytterfyld |
| | | Johanni Shakespere filio suo qui in forma |
| | | juris juratus exhibuit inventariam ad summam |
| | | xxxvij ^{li} xvij ^s . |

XXXV

ROBERT ARDEN'S WILL

PROBATE was granted at Worcester, December 16th, 1556.

In the name of God Amen the xxiiij.th daye of November in the yeare of our Lorde God 1556 in the thirde and the forthe yeare of the raygne of our soveraigne lorde and ladye Phylipe and Marye, kyng and quene &c. I Robart Arden of Wyllmecote in the parryche of Aston Caunntlowe secke in bodye and good and perfett of remembrance make this my laste will and testement in maner and forme folowyng.—

Fyryste I bequethe my solle to Allmyghtye God and to our bleside Laydye Sent Marye and to all the holye compenye of heven and my bodye to be beryde in the churchyarde of Seynt Jhon the Babtyste in Aston aforsayde. Allso I give and bequethe to my youngste dowghter Marye all my lande in Willmecote, cawlide Asbyes and the crop apone the grounde sowne and tyllide as hitt is and vj. li. xiiij. s. iiij. d. of monye to be payde orr ere my goodes be devydide. Allso I gyve and bequethe to my dowghter Ales the thyrde parte of all mye goodes moveable and unmoveable in fylde and towne after my dettes and leggeses be performyde besydes that goode she hathe of her owne att this tyme. Allso I gyve and bequethe to Annes my wyfe vj. li. xiiij. s. iiij. d. apone this condysione that shall sofer my dowghter Ales quyetlye to ynyoye halfe my cople-houlde in Wyllmecote dwryng the tyme of her wyddowewhodde and if she will nott soffer my dowghter Ales quyetlye to occupye halfe wth her then I will that my wyfe shall have butt iiij. li. vj. s. viij. d. and her gintur in Snyterfylde. Item I will that the resedowe of all my goodes moveable &

unmoveable my funeralles & my dettes dyscharyde I gyve & bequethe to my other cheldren to be equaleye devidide amongeste them by the descreshyon of Adam Palmer Hugh Porter of Snytterfylde & Jhon Skerlett whome I do orden and make my overseres of this my last will and testament & they to have for ther peynes takyng in this behalfe xx. s. apese. Allso I ordene and constytute and make my ffull exeqtores Ales & Marye my dowghteres : of this my last will and testament : And they to have no more for ther peynes takyng now as afore geven them. Allso I gyve & bequethe to every house that hathe no teme in the parryche of Aston to every howse iiij. d. Thes beyng wytnesses Sir Wylliam Borton curett Adam Palmer Jhon Skerlett Thomas Jhenkes Wylliam Pytt with other mo.

The Ynventory of all the goodes moveable and unmoveable of Robart Ardennes of Wyllmcote late desseside made the ix.th day of December in the thyrde and the forthe yeare of the raygne of our soveraygne lorde and ladye, Phylipe and Marye kyng and quen, &c. 1556.

Imprimis in the halle ij. table-bordes ij. choyeres ij. formes one cobbowrde ij. coshenes ij. benches and one lytle table with shellves, priside att viij. s. Item ij. peyntide clothes in the hall and v. peyntid clothes in the chamber vij. peare of shettes ii. cofferes one which priside at xvij. s. Item, v. borde clothes ij. toweles and one dyeper towelle prisid att vj. s. viij. d. Item one fether bedde ij. mattereses viij. canvases one coverlett ij. bosteres one pelowe iiij. peyntide clothes one whyche prisid att xxvj. s. viij. d. Item in the kechen iiij. panes iiij. pottes, ij. candellstykes one bason one chafyng-dyche ij. cathernes ij. skellettes one frying pane a gredyerene and pott hanginges with hookes prisid att lj. s. viij. d. Item one broche a peare of cobbardes one axe a bill iiij. nagares ij. hachettes an ades a mattoke a yren crowe one fatt iiij. barrells iiij. payles a quyrne a knedyng trogh a lonng sawe a hansaw prisid at xx. s. ij. d. Item viij. oxen ij. bollokes vij. kyne iiij. wayning caves xxiiij. li. Item iiij. horses ij. coltes prisid att viij. li. Item l.ti. shepe prisid

att vij. li. Item the whate in the barne & the barley prisid att xviii. li. Item the heye and the pease ottes and the strawe prisid att iij. li. vj. s. viij. d. Item ix. swyne prisid att xxvi. s. viij. d. Item the bees and powltrye prisid att v. s. Item carte & carte geares and plogh and plogh geares with harrowes prisid att xl. s. Item the wodd in the yarde & the baken in the roffe prisid att xxx. s. Item the wheate in the fylde prisid att vj. li. xiiij. s. iiij. d. Summa totalis lxxvii. li. xj. s. x. d.

XXXVI

JOHN SHAKESPEARE AND THE PLAYERS

IN connection with the controversy as to John Shakespeare's religion and the argument that his patronage of the Strolling Players is against the hypothesis that he was a Puritan, it is interesting to find that the Chamberlain's Accounts¹ during his year of office as High Bailiff contain a record of the payment of nine shillings to the Queen's Players and of twelve pence to the Earl of Leicester's Players for performances before the Council. During the greater part of John Shakespeare's lifetime the visits of companies of players to Stratford-upon-Avon were frequent, two or more being recorded in some years. Public opinion was, however, changing on the subject of the morality of stage plays, and in 1602 the Council passed a byelaw against performances in the "chamber, the guild hall, . . . in any part of the howsse or courte from hensforward upon payne that whosoever of the Baylief, Aldermen, and Burgesses of this borough shall gyve leave or licence thereunto shall forfeit for every offence 10^s." This penalty was increased to £10 by order of the Council in February 1611-2. The accounts for the year 1622 contain an item of six shillings "payd to the Kinge's Players for not playing in the hall," a payment no doubt intended as a solatium to a company whose patron the Stratford councillors hesitated to offend, although the performances were regarded with aversion by the strong Puritan section of the inhabitants.

¹ Accounts to Michaelmas 1569. *Council Book B.*

XXXVII

THE VICAR OF CHARLECOTE

THE position occupied by Richard Southam, the vicar of Charlecote in the time of Shakespeare, is indicated by some of his answers to the Six Articles presented at the Bishop's visitation at Stratford-upon-Avon on September 9th, 1585: "I have taken no degree of schoole neyther in Oxforde nor Cambridge. I have no lycense to preache, nyther am I any preacher. . . . I knowe not any . . . that doth chalendge the gyfte of the viccaridge within my parishe, but my good patron and master S^r Thomas Lucy, Knighte, the true patron thereof."

XXXVIII

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S WILL

Now in the Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House, London.

Proved in the Prerogative Court, by John Hall, one of the executors, June 22nd, 1616.

The words printed in italics are interlineations in the original. Those between square brackets are cancelled in the original.

VICESIMO quinto die [Januarii] *Martii* Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi nunc Regis Anglie &c. [Decimo quarto et Scotie xlix^o Annoque Domini 1616.

T. W^m SHACKSPEARE

R

In the name of god Amen I William Shackspeare of Stratford vpon Avon in the countie of Warr gent in perfect health & memorie god be praysed doe make & Ordayne this my last will & testament in manner & forme followeing That ys to saye first I Comend my Soule into the handes of god my Creator hoping & assuredlie beleeying through thonelie merittes of Jesus Christe my Saviour to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge And my bodye to the Earth whereof yt ys made Item I gyve & bequeath unto my [sonne in L] Daughter Judyth One hundred & fyftie poundes of lawfull English money to be paid unto her in manner and forme followeing that ys to saye one hundred poundes *in discharge of her marriage porcion* within one yeare after my deceas with consideracion after the

rate of twoe shillings in the pound for soe long tyme as the same shalbe unpaied unto her after my deceas & the ffyftie poundes residewe thereof upon her surrendring of or gyving of such sufficient securitie as the overseers of this my will shall like of to surrender or graunte all her estate & right that shall discend or come unto her after my deceas or *that shee* nowe hath of in or to one copiehold tenemente with thappurtenaunces lyeing & being in Stratford upon Avon aforesaied in the saied countie of Warr being parcell or holden of the mannor of Rowington unto my daughter Susanna Hall and her heires for ever Item I gyve and bequeath unto my saied daughter Judith one hundred and ffyftie poundes more if shee or anie issue of her bodie be lyvinge att thend of three yeares next ensueing the daie of the date of this my will during which tyme my executours to paie her consideracion from my deceas according to the rate aforesaied And if she dye within the saied terme without issue of her bodye then my will ys and I doe gyve and bequeath one hundred poundes thereof to my neece Elizabeth Hall & the ffiftie poundes to be sett fourth by my executours during the lief of my sister Johane Harte & the use and proffitt thereof cominge shalbe payed to my saied sister Jone & after her deceas the saied l.^{ty} shall remaine amongst the children of my saied sister equallie to be devidid amongst them but if my saied daughter Judith be lyving att thend of the saied three yeares or anie yssue of her bodye then my will ys & soe I devise & bequeath the saied hundred and ffyftie poundes to be sett out *by my executours and overseers* for the best benefitt of her and her issue and *the stock not to be* paied unto her soe long as she shalbe married & covert baron [by my executours & overseers] but my will ys that she shall have the consideracion yearelie paied unto her during her lief &, after her deceas the saied stock and consideracion to bee paied to her children if she have anie & if not to her executours or assignes she lyving the saied terme after my deceas Provided that yf such husband as she shall att thend of the saied three yeares be married unto or att anie after doe sufficientlie assure unto her & thissue of her bodie landes awnswereable to

the porcion by this my will gyven unto her and to be adjudged soe by my executours & overseers then my will ys that the said cl.^{ke} shalbe paied to such husbond as shall make such assurance to his owne use Item I gyve and bequeath unto my saied sister Jone xx.^s & all my wearing apparrell to be paied and delivered within one yeare after my deceas and I doe will & devise unto her *the house* with thappurtenaunces in Stratford wherein she dwelleth for her naturall lief under the yearelie rent of xij.^d Item I gyve and bequeath unto her three sonnes William Harte . . . Hart and Michaell Harte ffyve poundes a peece to be payed within one yeare after my deceas [to be sett out for her within one yeare after my deceas by my executours with thadvise and direccions of my overseers for her best proffitt untill her mariage and then the same with the increase thereof to be paied unto her] Item I gyve and bequeath unto [her] *the saied Elizabeth Hall* all my plate *except my brod silver & gilt boles* that I now have att the date of this my will Item I gyve and bequeath unto the poore of Stratford aforesaid tenn poundes to Mr. Thomas Combe my sword to Thomas Russell esquier ffyve poundes & to ffrauncis Collins of the Borough of Warr in the countie of Warr gent thirteene poundes sixe shillinges & eight pence to be paied within one yeare after my deceas Item I gyve & bequeath to [Mr. Richard Tyler thelder] *Hamlett Sadler xxvj.^s viij.^d* to buy him a ringe to *William Raynoldes gent., xxvj.^s viij.^d* to buy him a ringe to my godson William Walker xx^s in gold to Anthonye Nashe gent. xxvj.^s viij.^d & to Mr. John Nashe xxvj.^s viij.^d [in gold] *and to my fellowes John Hemynges Richard Burbage and Henry Cundell xxvj.^s viij.^d* a peece to buy them ringes Item I gyve will bequeath & devise unto my daughter Susanna Hall *for better enabling of her to performe this my will & towards the performans thereof* all that capitall messuage or tenemente with thappurtenaunces *in Stratford aforesaid* called the Newe Place wherein I nowe dwell and twoe messuages or tenementes with thappurtenaunces scituat lyeing and being in Henley streete within the borough of Stratford aforesaid And all my barnes stables orchardes gardens landes tenementes and hereditamentes whatsoever

actuat lyeing and being or to be had receyved perceyved or taken within the townes hamlettes villages ffieldes & groundes of Stratford upon Avon Oldstratford Bushopton & Welcombe or in anie of them in the saied countie of Warr And alsoe all that messuage or tenemente with thappurtennaunces wherein one John Robinson dwelleth scituat lyeing and being in the Blackfriars in London nere the Wardrobe and all other my landes tenementes and hereditamentes whatsoever To have and to hold all and singuler the saied premisses with their appurtennaunces unto the saied Susanna Hall for and during the terme of her naturall lief and after her deceas to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueing and to the heires males of the bodie of the saied first sonne lawfullie yssueinge & for defalt of such issue to the second sonne of her bodie lawfullie issueinge and to the heires males of the bodie of the saied second sonne lawfullie yssueinge and for defalt of such heires to the third sonne of the bodie of the saied Susanna lawfullie yssueing & of the heires males of the bodie of the saied third sonne lawfullie yssueing and for defalt of such issue the same soe to be & remaine to the ffourth [sonne] ffyft sixte and seaventh sonnes of her bodie lawfullie issueing one after another & to the heires males of the bodies of the saied fourth fifth sixte & seaventh sonnes lawfullie yssueing in such manner as yt ys before lymitted to be and remaine to the first second and third sonns of her bodie and to their heires males and for defalt of such issue the said premisses to be & remaine to my sayed neece Hall & the heires males of her bodie lawfullie yssueing and for defalt of such issue to my daughter Judith & the heires males of her bodie lawfullie issueinge and for defalt of such issue to the right heires of me the saied William Shackspere for ever *Item I gyve unto my wief my second best bed with the furniture* *Item I gyve & bequeath to my saied daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bole* All the rest of my goodes chattel leases plate jewels & household stuffe whatsoever after my dettes and legasies paied & my funerall expences discharged I gyve devise and bequeath to my Sonne in Lawe John Hall gent & my daughter Susanna his wief whom I

ordaine and make executours of this my last will and testament
 And I doe intreat & appoint *the saied* Thomas Russell esquier
 and ffrauncis Collins gent to be overseers hereof And doe
 revoke all former wills & publishe this to be my last will and
 testament In witness whereof I have hereunto put my [seale]
hand the daie & yeare first abovewritten

By me WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE

Witnes to the publishing hereof

FRA: COLLYNS

JULYUS SHAWE

JOHN ROBINSON

HAMNET SADLER

ROBERT WHATTCOTT

Probatum coram magistro Willielmo Byrde legum doctore
 comiss. &c. xxij^{da} die mensis Junii, Anno Domini 1616
 Juramento Johannis Hall unius executorum &c. cui &c.
 de bene &c. Jurat. Reservat. potestate &c. Susanne Hall
 alteri executorum &c. cum venerit &c. petitur. Inv. ex^t.

Shakespeare's signature appears at the foot of each of the
 three sheets of paper upon which the will is written. These
 signatures, together with two appended to the deeds of the
 Blackfriars property, are the only specimens of the poet's
 handwriting known to be in existence.

XXXIX

SHAKESPEARE IN HIS OWN PLAYS

THE following is a note by William Oldys. *A Literary Antiquary*, 1862 edition, pp. 45-6 :—

“ One of Shakspeare’s younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of King Charles II., would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother Will, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays. This custom, as his brother’s fame enlarged, and his dramatick entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal, if not of all our theatres, he continued, it seems, so long after his brother’s death, as even to the latter end of his own life. The curiosity at this time of the most noted actors to learn something from him of his brother, &c., they justly held him in the highest veneration. And it may be well believed, as there was besides a kinsman and descendant of the family, who was then a celebrated actor among them, this opportunity made them greedily inquisitive into every little circumstance, more especially in his dramatick character, which his brother could relate of him. But he, it seems, was so stricken in years, and possibly his memory so weakened with infirmities (which might make him the easier pass for a man of weak intellects) that he could give them but little light into their enquiries; and all that could be recollected from him of his brother Will in that station was, the faint, general, and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies,

wherein, being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company who were eating, and one of them sung a song.”¹

¹ The character of Adam in *As You Like It*.

XL

AN ALLUSION TO SHAKESPEARE

AMONG the MS. books in the Diocesan Registry at Worcester there is a rough quarto volume, bound in vellum, containing Consistory Court precedents, miscellaneous extracts from various authors, and what appear to be some original verses. On the fly-leaf in front of the book is the name "John Pryce," who was Chancellor of the diocese from 1696 to 1705. There is also the date "1676," so that the contents were probably written between the two latter dates. On folio 73b are the following verses :—

Ben Johnson traveling from London to Oxford upon a Valentine's day meets an Highwayman.

Ben Johnson. Flee hence or by thy Coat of Steele
I'll make thy heart my brassen bullet feele
And send that thrice as theevish soule of thine
To Hell to be the Devell's valentine .

Reply by y^e Hman.

Robber. Art thou great Ben or y^e revived ghost
Of famous Shakespeare or some drunken host
That beeing tipsy wth thy muddy beer
Dost think thy rhyme shall dawnt my soule wth feare.

Know this base slave that I am one of those
Can take a purse as well in verse as proes
And wth thou art dead wright this upon thy herse
Here ly's a Poet y^e was robb'd in verse.

XLI

ANECDOTES FROM THE PLUME MSS

IN or about the years 1657-9, Dr. Plume, Vicar of Greenwich, made notes of the following anecdotes, which were related to him by Vice-Admiral Mennes. A well-known variation of the first was recorded by Sir Nicholas L'Estrange (*Harleian MSS.*). Both of these anecdotes were discovered by Dr. Andrew Clark in the *Plume MSS.* at Maldon, Essex, and they were published in the *Westminster Gazette* on October 31st, 1904. Dr. Clark, to whom I am indebted for correct extracts, points out that Plume was wrong in attributing the interview with John Shakespeare to Mennes, who was born in 1598 or 1599. John Shakespeare died in 1601.

"Ben Jonson, at the Christning of Shakespeare his child, to which he was invited godfather, said to him—'Now you expect a great matter. But I will give it a Latin [latten] spoon, and you shall translate it.'

"He [Shakespeare] was a glover's son. Sir John Mennes saw once his old father in his shop—a merry-cheekt old man, that said, 'Will was a good honest fellow, but he darest have crakt a jesst with him att any time.'"

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